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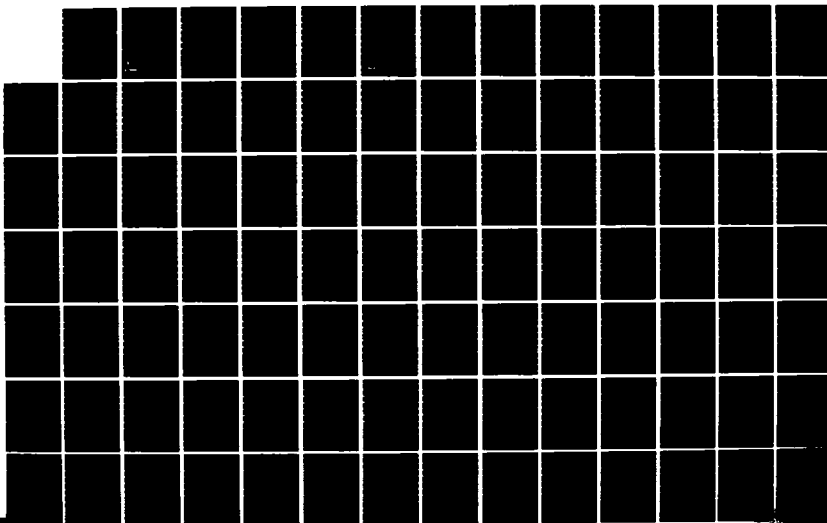
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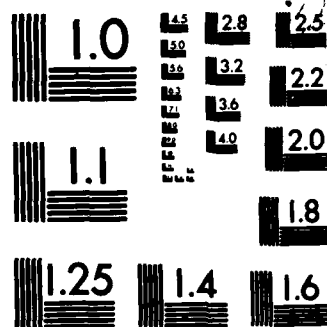
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THE ECONOMIST'S PERCEPTION OF THE U.S.-SOVIET
STRATEGIC BALANCE: AN UPDATE FOR 1979-1981

Joan Goldhamer

November 1983

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The Director of Net Assessment,
Office of the Secretary of Defense

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Compares the image of the U.S.-Soviet projected by The Economist (London) during 1979-1981. and characteristics of their reporting on the strategic balance, with the findings of an earlier study covering the years 1946-1973. In contrast to the earlier period during which the United States was generally regarded as enjoying overall superiority, The Economist in 1979-1981 perceives the balances as tilting in favor of the Soviet Union. Shifts are noted in the aspects of the the strategic balance that The Economist considers critical in evaluating the balance, with the conventional forces moving from the background to the forefront of attention and defensive capabilities receding. While most characteristics of The Economist's reporting on the strategic balance identified in the earlier study still prevail, a significant change is found in its treatment of new weapon developments. These are no longer perceived as creating an immediate shift in the strategic balance, even before they become operational.

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A RAND NOTE

*THE ECONOMIST'S PERCEPTION OF THE U.S.-SOVIET
STRATEGIC BALANCE: AN UPDATE FOR 1979-1981*

Joan Goldhamer

November 1983

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Prepared for

The Director of Net Assessment,
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PREFACE

This Note is part of a series of studies on perceptions of the U.S.-Soviet military balance undertaken by The Rand Corporation for the Director of Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense.

In 1975, as part of a broader project on perceptions of the U.S.-Soviet military balance conducted for the Technology Assessments Office of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, Herbert Goldhamer studied perceptions of the strategic military balance between the United States and the Soviet Union during the years 1948-1973 as reflected in two periodicals with influential international audiences: the British weekly *The Economist*, and the French daily *Le Monde*. His reports (unpublished), "*The Economist's* Perception of the U.S.-Soviet Strategic Balance, 1948-1973," The Rand Corporation, February 1975, and "*Le Monde's* Perception of the U.S.-Soviet Strategic Balance, 1948-1973," The Rand Corporation, November 1975, traced changes in perceptions of the balance over the 26-year period, and analyzed how each of the periodicals characteristically treated the subject. An article summarizing the findings of these studies was later published in the British journal *Survival*.¹

The present Note, by Joan Goldhamer, is a follow-on to the original study of *The Economist*. It examines *The Economist's* treatment of the U.S.-Soviet strategic balance for the years 1979, 1980, and 1981 to ascertain whether changes have occurred in *The Economist's* perception and reporting of the balance.

This material should be of interest to those concerned with U.S. policies and programs regarding the Atlantic Alliance, and to those whose interest is in understanding and influencing public and elite perceptions of the military balance.

The author is a consultant to The Rand Corporation.

¹Herbert Goldhamer, "The US-Soviet Strategic Balance as seen from London and Paris," *Survival*, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, September/October 1977, pp. 202-207.

SUMMARY

This study analyzed material related to the U.S.-Soviet strategic balance in the 1979-1981 issues of *The Economist* in order to permit comparison with an earlier study of the years 1948-1973. The purpose was to establish (1) whether any changes had occurred in *The Economist's* image of the strategic balance; (2) whether the current image derived from consideration of the same dimensions as those *The Economist* considered critical in the past; and (3) whether *The Economist* continued to exhibit the same characteristics in its reporting on the strategic balance that had been identified in the initial study. Any changes along these lines, it was thought, would be of interest for the light they might throw on the process of perception and the indications they might offer to those interested in shaping perceptions of the military balance.

Analysis revealed that some changes had occurred in each of the areas examined.

(1) *Image of the strategic balance: The Economist's* 1979-1981 image of the strategic balance differed markedly from that of the earlier period. Whereas prior to 1973 the United States was, with occasional interruptions, generally regarded as enjoying overall superiority to the Soviet Union in its intercontinental nuclear capability, during 1971-1981 *The Economist* told its readers that the balance was tilting in favor of the Soviet Union. It asserted that the Soviet Union had achieved nuclear parity with the United States and was pulling ahead. It further predicted that for the remainder of the decade and possibly into the early 1990s, U.S. missiles in their fixed silos would be vulnerable to a first strike by the Soviet Union which the United States would in effect not be able to retaliate. (*The Economist* reasoned that the Soviet Union would have enough accurate warheads to destroy all U.S. land-based missiles in their silos while still keeping some weapons in reserve. U.S. submarine missiles, not being accurate enough to destroy this reserve, could only be aimed at Russian cities. The Russians would inevitably then use their reserve to

retaliate with a strike against American cities.) In both periods, assessments of the strategic balance were shaped by a number of factors both military and nonmilitary.

(2) *Critical dimensions:* The number and quality of intercontinental missiles and delivery vehicles on each side, and the rate at which additional improved weapons were believed to be coming on line, were fundamental to the assessment of the strategic balance in both periods studied. Although the purist might reject statements about conventional forces as being outside the definition of "strategic," for *The Economist* during 1979-1981, conventional forces emerged as a critical element in weighing the relative strength of the United States and the Soviet Union. It took the position that once having achieved nuclear parity, the Soviets would use their superiority in conventional forces to extend their empire. The West, short of risking a nuclear holocaust, would be unable to deter such aggression because it lacked the necessary conventional forces. For *The Economist*, U.S. loss of nuclear superiority brought conventional forces from the background into the forefront of attention.

While antiballistic missiles and civil defense received a fair amount of attention in *The Economist's* discussion of the strategic balance in the earlier period, little mention was made of this aspect of the balance in 1979-1981. During neither period was great stress laid on command, control, communications, and intelligence in the assessment process.

(3) *Characteristics of reporting:* Most of the characteristics of *The Economist's* reporting on the strategic balance identified in the earlier study were found to be true for 1979-1981 as well. One exception to this was found in *The Economist's* treatment of new weapons development. In contrast to the earlier period during which *The Economist* exhibited a tendency to perceive an immediate shift in the strategic balance when a new weapon was announced, throughout 1979-1981 it demonstrated awareness of the fact that years elapse between design, initial tests, and deployment. Another point of difference emerged with respect to deterrence. It was noted in the initial study that *The Economist* would occasionally shift from judging the strategic balance on the basis of numbers of delivery vehicles and defense capabilities to

that of the extent to which one nation deterred the other. For the 1979-1981 period U.S. inability to deter the Soviet Union was an assumption underlying discussion of the balance, and no longer an independent basis for evaluating it.

Those characteristics identified in the earlier study that continued to appear, with only minor qualifications, in *The Economist's* 1979-1981 treatment of the strategic balance were:

- that various dimensions of the strategic balance (e.g., antiballistic missiles, civil defense) tended to come into prominence and then recede, giving place to some new facet;
- that expectations of a negative or positive future based on rates of change colored the image of the present status;
- that relative defense spending was interpreted as an indicator of the strategic balance;
- that developments in space were treated as a "race"--a race in which the Soviets were generally viewed as ahead principally because what was regarded as a consistent program of research (as opposed to U.S. stop-and-go efforts) had provided the Russians with more "firsts" in the military application of space;
- that *The Economist* relied chiefly on U.S. sources in its discussions of the strategic balance.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As an "update," this Note clearly owes its existence to the original study by the late Herbert Goldhamer that inspired it and served as its model. The work of a gifted analyst can never, of course, be duplicated. The present author's effort to review more recent material in the light of the earlier work benefited greatly from access to several of Herbert Goldhamer's colleagues--Nathan Leites, Andrew W. Marshall, Hans Speier, and Charles Wolf, Jr. All were generous with their assistance and their keen perceptions and thoughtful comments proved invaluable. I am grateful to them for having steered me away from careless mistakes and questionable statements. Responsibility for any errors or misperceptions that remain, however, is entirely mine.

Were it not for Martha Cooper's persistent drive for perfection and persuasive ways with the word processor, this Note might never have become fit to print. Her familiarity with Rand's procedures was also a considerable boon throughout its production.

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

An earlier study of *The Economist* tracked its perceptions of the U.S.-Soviet strategic balance between 1948 and 1973, and identified certain characteristics of its reporting on the balance. The present research was undertaken to determine whether *The Economist's* perception of the strategic balance had changed since 1973, and whether any changes had occurred in the manner in which it perceived and reported on the balance.

The first objective, then, was to ascertain *The Economist's* current perception of the strategic balance. Having established what *The Economist* thought the balance to be, it would then be possible to identify any changes in the overall assessment and, of perhaps even greater interest, to examine what dimensions *The Economist* was currently focusing on in arriving at its assessment and whether these were the same ones that had been prominent during the earlier period. Changes would be of interest for the light they might throw on the process of perception.

A second and no less important objective was to examine *The Economist's* writings of a more recent period for the presence or absence of the specific characteristics of reporting identified in the earlier study. There was, for instance, the question of whether *The Economist* still showed a tendency to revise its assessment of the balance the moment a new weapon design was announced; or, to take another example, whether rates of change continued to influence the way in which the present balance was viewed.

In other words, *The Economist's* writings of a more recent period were to be examined in the light of the findings of the earlier study to pinpoint any changes that had occurred in the way in which *The Economist* processed material pertaining to the strategic balance. The years 1979-1981 were selected for study.

BACKGROUND

The initial study of *The Economist's* perception of the U.S.-Soviet strategic balance was prompted by recognition of the importance of knowing how various groups--potential antagonists, allies, neutrals, one's own people--view the balance of military power. As Herbert Goldhamer wrote in connection with his studies of *The Economist* and *Le Monde*:

Perceptions of the military forces and capabilities of other nations do not necessarily correspond with the actual status of these forces. As history demonstrates, secrecy, deception and self-deception frequently combine to produce disparities between reality and belief. These disparities often have important political and military consequences, affecting as they do opportunities for deterrence and intimidation, the probability of war and success or failure if war occurs.¹

There was interest in knowing whether and how perceptions of the military balance had changed over time. For this purpose, periodicals have the advantage of providing a record that does not depend on recollection of past opinions. *The Economist* and *Le Monde*, specifically, were selected for study for several reasons:

First, the United States has an interest in the opinions and morale of her European allies, and the effect on them of their information and judgments on the US-Soviet strategic balance.

Second, *The Economist* and *Le Monde* are read by political, economic and administrative elites, not only in their own countries but throughout Europe and, indeed, the world.

Third, these journals are of interest not only for their influence on others but as an expression of opinion and information by a relatively sophisticated set of journalists whose perceptions of the balance have an interest independent of their influence. . . .

¹Herbert Goldhamer, "The US-Soviet Strategic Balance as seen from London and Paris," *Survival*, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, September/October 1977, p. 202.

Finally, it seemed reasonable to suppose that a careful reading of their reporting and editorial writing on the US-Soviet balance would provide some insights into how perceptions of the strategic balance are shaped.²

The Economist, in particular, offered other characteristics that the author of the original paper felt contributed to its value as an object of study:

The Economist represents, on the whole, a relatively high degree of consistency of audience, editorial policy, style, and substantive coverage for the quarter century studied, and this adds to its value as an object of study.

The Economist combines reportage with a large amount of editorializing comment and this encourages the expression of opinion on most of the subjects it covers. Consequently even in areas where firm information is scanty, *The Economist* tends to provide a substantial amount of discussion.

Being a weekly, *The Economist* is able to express opinions that are probably more considered than those of a daily newspaper.

The Economist's special interest in U.S. affairs (*American Survey*) and the presence of its correspondents in the United States means that on matters dealing with the United States, such as the US-SU strategic balance, its opinions are shaped by a range of information that further reduces tendencies toward arbitrary judgments.³

Certain cautions contained in the original study regarding interpretation of the results apply with equal force to the results of the present research:

1. The beliefs or opinions expressed in *The Economist* may on occasion be influenced by certain journalistic imperatives and not reflect accurately the opinion of the writer or the journal's editorial staff. (a) Thus, a desire to announce sensational news or opinions or to give prosaic news a more

² Ibid.

³ Herbert Goldhamer, "The Economist's Perception of the U.S.-Soviet Strategic Balance, 1948-1973," unpublished study, The Rand Corporation, February 1975, pp. 2-3.

important or sensational character could lead to some distortion. (b) A desire to appear very well informed may lead to a more confident opinion than is actually held. (c) A fear of being proved wrong by subsequent events may lead to a dampening down of the opinions actually held. My own judgment based on a close reading of 26 years of *The Economist* is that if such distortions do exist, the first two are more likely than the third.

2. Whether readers of *The Economist* largely accept its views on defense and security matters is impossible to state with any real confidence. . . . The majority of readers who are not specialists on security matters might be presumed to accept the opinions of *The Economist* . . . The prestige of the journal, the considerable detail in which military matters are discussed, and the air of authority in which these discussions are enveloped, suggest that acceptability is substantial. But . . . two points have to be kept in mind: (a) Readers are certainly exposed to other sources of information as well. . . . [and] (b) . . . one must recognize that opinions and information, their acceptance and absorption, and their effect on a variety of political-military judgements are also a function of political, ideological, and other positions and mental habits, and not simply the result of information inputs.⁴

THE DATA

Like its predecessor, this Note is based on an analysis of military and military-political articles and news items in *The Economist*.

Selection of items was guided by the principles and findings of the original study. There, it was pointed out that although one could find statements in *The Economist* that conformed to what a military specialist might define as the strategic balance--i.e., a quantitative statement referring to intercontinental nuclear warfare--*The Economist's* own conception of the strategic balance included additional elements. It was further noted that *The Economist's* as well as its readers' perceptions may well be modified by behavior, events, or statements that are not, strictly speaking, "strategic in nature."⁵ Thus, the items selected for study covered a broad spectrum, ranging from judgments about qualitative as well as quantitative aspects of the nuclear balance between the superpowers, to statements about overall (i.e., nuclear plus conventional) military strength, more general evaluations of such

⁴Ibid., pp. 3-4.

⁵Ibid., pp. 6-13.

factors as war-winning ability and national will, and interpretations of military and political goals.

PROCEDURE

From the first issue of 1979 (dated 30 December 1978-5 January 1979) to the last one of 1981 (dated 26 December 1981-8 January 1982), every issue of *The Economist* was examined, cover to cover, for items deemed relevant to the analysis.

The items selected were photocopied.⁶ Relevant statements were typed verbatim on separate slips and classified under one or more of the headings that were used in the earlier study: Nuclear Weapons; Delivery; Defense; General Power Balance, War Winning Ability, Deterrence; Doctrine; Predictions; and Postdictions. Some additional categories, demanded by the new material, were added. These included such classifications as image of the American president, image of the Soviet Union, defense budget, the United States as an ally, and other factors which seemed to shape *The Economist's* image of the balance.

In addition, to test a hypothesis about increasing attention to military affairs during the 1979-1981 period, a sample of issues was selected and a tabulation made of the military and nonmilitary items about the United States and the Soviet Union that appeared in each of those issues.

PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

Part I of this Note discusses *The Economist's* image of the nuclear balance for the 1979-1981 period, and examines the factors that seem to have shaped that image.

The earlier study identified certain characteristics of *The Economist's* reporting on strategic balance. Part II of the present study takes up the question of whether these characteristics still apply.

⁶The data collected for the 1948-1973 study consisted of summaries of the items, either in paraphrase or verbatim form. Since issues of *The Economist* for 1979-1981 were readily accessible it was possible to photocopy the necessary pages, and the items in their original form constituted the data.

Appendix A summarizes in tabular form the content of items that fell under the headings used in the original study. This permits comparison of the two time periods.

The information presented by *The Economist* on the number of warheads, long-range bombers and intercontinental missiles held by the United States and the Soviet Union at a given time was summarized in ratio form on charts for the 1948-1973 period. These charts have been updated with figures from the 1979-1981 issues and appear as Appendix B.

The results of the tabulation of military and nonmilitary items in a sample of issues are presented in Appendix C.

Appendix D contains some comments on *The Economist's* perception of its role in international affairs.

PART I: *THE ECONOMIST'S* IMAGE OF THE NUCLEAR BALANCE 1979-1981

INTRODUCTION

This portion of the Note will first describe what *The Economist* told its readers about the U.S.-Soviet strategic balance during 1979-1981.

Analysis of statements about the balance revealed the military dimensions *The Economist* seemed to consider critical in arriving at its assessment, and identified certain other factors that helped shape the image. These findings constitute the remainder of Part I.

A. IMAGE OF THE STRATEGIC BALANCE

It is possible to distinguish three different types of statements in *The Economist's* discussions of the U.S.-Soviet balance. Some statements presented the number of intercontinental nuclear weapons on each side. These were relatively infrequent. More often, *The Economist* discussed the relative standing on intercontinental nuclear weapons in qualitative terms. In addition, *The Economist* from time to time referred in general terms to the balance of power between the two superpowers. While not all of these statements correspond to what the military specialist would consider strictly speaking to be the "strategic balance," they nonetheless must be considered in any analysis of *The Economist's* image of the balance.

The content of each of these three types of statements is described in the pages that follow.

1. Quantitative Statements

Although assumptions about the number of warheads, bombers, and missiles available to each side underlay its statements about the strategic balance, *The Economist* rarely presented figures that could be translated into a ratio. Such information was given to readers only twice during the three-year period: once in 1980 in a long article on "Nato and the Warsaw Pact,"¹ and again in 1981 in a lengthy article on

¹"Nato and the Warsaw Pact," *The Economist*, August 9, 1980, pp. 35-38.

"The East-West Struggle."² Taken together, these raw figures indicated two characteristics of the strategic balance: (1) that it was changing; and (2) that the change favored the Soviets who were catching up with the United States in warheads and increasing their lead in missiles.³

Warheads. A set of graphs accompanying the 1980 article indicated that what had been in 1979 an almost 2:1 U.S. lead in long-range nuclear warheads was gradually being eroded. By 1981, it was expected that the ratio would be a little more than 1:1 in the U.S. favor and *The Economist* projected that the Soviets would continue to close the gap through 1985.

Long-Range Bombers. No figures on bombers were cited during 1979 and 1980. A table on the Nato-China-Russia nuclear balance in the 1981 article showed the United States with a considerable advantage on this score: 376 American bombers as against 150 (not counting 65 Backfires) for the Soviets.

Intercontinental Missiles. The 1980 graph showed the Soviets with a considerable lead over the United States in intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs): 2,300 Soviet missiles to 1,700 on the U.S. side in 1979. The 1981 table indicated that the Soviets had increased their lead: 2,330 Soviet missiles to 1,628 for the United States.

The Economist's figures for these years are almost identical with the official figures of the U.S. Department of Defense. As Table I.1 shows, *The Economist's* published figures and those later revealed by the United States for the years 1979-1981 show only minor differences.⁴ This appears to be an instance where "reality" and "perception" coincided.

²"The East-West Struggle," *The Economist*, December 26, 1981, pp. 41-64.

³See Figures in Appendix B.

⁴This coincidence is not surprising. Department of Defense figures become available to military analysts and eventually find their way into published sources such as those of IISS, which would be accessible to *Economist* reporters.

Table I.1

*THE ECONOMIST'S PERCEPTION OF THE STRATEGIC BALANCE COMPARED
WITH OFFICIAL U.S. FIGURES*

Weapons and Delivery Vehicles	1979		1980		1981	
	<i>Economist</i>	DOD(a)	<i>Economist</i>	DOD(a)	<i>Economist</i>	DOD(a)
Warheads						
United States	9,000	9,200	9,000	9,200	9,000	9,200
Soviet Union	5,000	5,000	6,500	6,000	7,000	7,000
Long-range bombers						
United States	(b)	348	(b)	348	376	347
Soviet Union	(b)	156	(b)	156	150	156
Intercontinental missiles						
United States	1,700	1,710	(b)	1,710	1,628	1,630
Soviet Union	2,300	2,348	(b)	2,348	2,330	2,348

^aFigures taken from Department of Defense Annual Report, Fiscal Years 1981 and 1982.

^b*The Economist* did not cite any figures on this item for this year.

The fact that *The Economist* did not overwhelm its readers with ratios is probably not accidental. Rather it would seem to be a reflection of *The Economist's* conviction that no single measure, and certainly not numbers alone, can convey a true picture of the strategic balance. When numbers were presented they were accompanied by qualifying statements to the effect that an advantage in one respect was balanced by a disadvantage in another. Thus, in its 1980 article on NATO which presented figures showing a U.S. lead in the number of warheads, *The Economist* stated:

. . . the raw warhead totals do not tell the whole tale, anyway. A much higher percentage of America's warheads are carried by manned bombers and submarine-launched missiles. The bombers have a much smaller chance of getting through than missiles do, and the submarine missiles are not only much less accurate than the land-based ones--not accurate enough to destroy the other side's missile silos--but also less readily usable (only about half the American missile submarine fleet is at sea and ready for action at any given time). Thus a tally of "reliable and accurate" warheads--those on land-based ballistic missiles and cruise missiles--while still

failing to tell the whole story (as any single measure must) nevertheless gives a sobering second view of the warhead balance. (August 9, 1980, p. 36)

Again, in its 1981 survey of the East-West balance, *The Economist* reiterated the inadequacy of numbers, this time discounting somewhat the Soviet lead in missiles:

Its [Russia's] tally of nuclear delivery vehicles is greater than that of its main adversary, Nato . . . True, numbers of delivery vehicles do not tell all the story: accuracy, numbers of warheads and explosive power also count. . . . (December 26, 1981, p. 44)

This rejection of a purely quantitative evaluation of the strategic balance permeated *The Economist's* editorials and articles.

2. Qualitative Statements

During each of the years 1979, 1980, and 1981, *The Economist's* non-quantitative statements about the strategic balance also conveyed a picture of change, of a balance tipping in favor of the Soviet Union. Considered as a whole, these statements painted a picture of U.S. nuclear superiority in the past (1950s and 1960s), shifting to parity in the present (1979), moving swiftly into a period of dangerous vulnerability for the United States (early and mid-1980s), after which, the United States could regain a position of equality (late 1980s, 1990s).

The Past: 1950s and 1960s. When mentioned, the 1950s and early 1960s were referred to as a time of unquestioned U.S. nuclear superiority. Reference was made to the "lost American nuclear superiority of the 1950s and early 1960s"⁵ and to the fact that "Krushchev ran for cover [in the 1962 Cuban missile crisis] because he saw that America could easily win any nuclear war."⁶ *The Economist* doubted that such superiority could ever be recaptured:

⁵*The Economist*, August 8, 1981, p. 14.

⁶*The Economist*, December 27, 1980, p. 18.

. . . if you look at the sort of nuclear weapons that America can build over the next 10 years (and those Russia can build), it seems almost impossible that the easy superiority of the 1950s--when America could hit Russia without being seriously hit back--can be recaptured. (June 6, 1981, p. 12)⁷

The Past: The 1970s. Precisely when the United States may be said in *The Economist's* view to have lost its nuclear superiority is not clear. In December of 1978, *The Economist* referred in passing to "the nuclear weakness Mr Jimmy Carter inherited on becoming president two years ago."⁸ This would indicate that *The Economist* dated a deterioration in the U.S. nuclear position at least as far back as 1976. But concern for the United States as moving into a period of dangerous vulnerability seems to have emerged as a *major* theme for *The Economist* only in 1978.⁹ In June 1977, for example, it reported a Pentagon plan to introduce a new nuclear warhead (the Mk-12a), "a silo buster" that would "radically improve the accuracy and destructiveness of the Minuteman III missile," making it a more effective weapon than the Russians' SS-18. *The Economist* felt the "effect on the strategic balance [of this advance on the U.S. side] would be disturbing [i.e., upset the balance]."¹⁰ There seemed no hint of concern about the

⁷It may be helpful to remind the reader that pages 7 through nineteen or twenty of *The Economist* are usually given over to editorials. Therefore it may be assumed throughout this Note that quotations from these early pages represent the opinions of *The Economist's* editorial staff.

⁸*The Economist*, December 30, 1978, p. 7.

⁹Although 1977 and 1978 were not included in the present study, a spot check of issues was made for these years in order to ascertain when *The Economist* began to express concern about the vulnerability of the U.S. deterrent force.

¹⁰*The Economist*, June 4, 1977, p. 51. It is interesting to note that the Mk-12A, which was considered "destabilizing" in 1977, was not referred to as a factor offsetting Soviet superiority in 1979-1981. While this might provoke a question about *The Economist's* "institutional memory," it might also be interpreted as further evidence of the influence the Salt talks had on the assessment process (see below, pp. 17-18). Emphasis on the *number* of warheads, missiles, bombers, etc., on each side had the effect of submerging *qualitative* differences. Thus the qualitative improvement that the Mk-12A represented may simply have been lost in the welter of numbers. Another possibility is that by 1979 the "superiority" of the Mk-12A, in *The Economist's* view, may already have been matched by what is reported as a continuous rise in the number and accuracy of Soviet warheads.

vulnerability of the U.S. land-based missile force at that time.

In March 1978, however, *The Economist* wrote that President Carter was concerned about "a suspicion that the United States was letting its military guard slip," and reported that he "appears to be leaning towards the view that American land-based Minuteman rockets will before very long become vulnerable to a Russian first strike, and that the United States should therefore be ready with new alternatives."¹¹ By November 1978, Carter's request for a new civil defense plan was interpreted as in part having been introduced "to impress defence-minded critics who fear that the strategic balance may be tipping in the Soviet Union's favor."¹²

The "Present" of 1979-1981. During the 1979-1981 period, *The Economist* demonstrated some uncertainty about the status of the strategic balance. Clearly, it believed that the United States no longer enjoyed superiority in strategic capability. But there was some ambivalence about whether the balance was currently in equilibrium or already weighted in favor of the Soviet Union. Thus, there were references to America's loss of superiority and "Russia's arrival at nuclear equality with the United States."¹³

. . . Russia has modernised its nuclear armoury rapidly over the past six years. It is about to reach equality (at least) with the United States in intercontinental power . . .
(August 9, 1980, p. 36)

. . . the United States has lost its old nuclear superiority. The Americans no longer lead the Russians in intercontinental-range nuclear weapons . . . (May 9, 1981, p. 14)

This view of the strategic balance was reinforced by a U.S. spokesman. A 1979 foreign policy speech delivered by then Secretary of State Vance described the United States as moving, according to *The Economist's* report, from "a period of American strategic supremacy to an era of

¹¹*The Economist*, March 25, 1978, pp. 25, 26.

¹²*The Economist*, November 18, 1978, p. 21.

¹³*The Economist*, July 12, 1980, p. 12.

'stable strategic equivalence'--shared power with the Soviet Union, in other words."¹⁴

Even more often, it was suggested that the strategic balance might possibly already have tipped in favor of the Soviets:

The Salt-2 treaty that Mr Carter is going to sign with Mr Brezhnev on June 18th ratifies the arrival of Russia at nuclear parity with America (and some say more than parity) . . . (June 9, 1979, p. 11)

Russia has achieved a long-range nuclear striking force on the point of surpassing America's . . . The Americans no longer have the ability--as they probably had in the 1960s--to wipe out Russia's long-range missiles by striking first. (September 8, 1979, pp. 15-16)

In most of the world's most important places, the Russians now have superiority in non-nuclear forces--and parity, or even an advantage, in nuclear ones. (March 15, 1980, p. 13)

The Future: Early and Mid-1980s. During the three years 1979-1981, *The Economist* presented its readers repeatedly with the image of a once potent United States soon to find its missile force vulnerable to a first strike by the Soviet Union:

Some time in the early 1980s Russia will have enough nuclear-tipped missiles, with enough accuracy, to destroy essentially all of America's land-based missiles--while they are still in their silos--with a first strike. (September 22, 1979, p. 91)

It is now recognised that, by 1982 or 1983, Russia will be able to destroy all the American land-based missiles--the only ones that now threaten Russian silos--with a single strike, and using only a part of its missile force. (March 1, 1980, p. 83)

Within a year or two, the Russians will have enough accurate warheads to destroy virtually all America's land-based missiles, while still keeping some of their own weapons in reserve. (At that time the Americans will be in a position to destroy only about a third of Russia's land-based missiles. . . .) It is true that, if this happened, some of

¹⁴*The Economist*, May 12, 1979, p. 48.

America's submarine missiles would be left untouched. But these are not accurate enough to destroy Russia's reserve of unused missiles. They could only be aimed at Russia's cities--in the certain knowledge that Russia's reserve could then obliterate the United States. (August 29, 1981, p. 16)

By some time in the early 1980s Russia's new intercontinental ballistic missiles will probably be able to destroy America's entire land-based missile force in a single cataclysmic attack. (September 12, 1981, p. 15)

The Future: Late 1980s, 1990s. As *The Economist* saw it, the period of vulnerability for the United States was to be limited. Two sets of factors, it indicated, would operate ultimately to improve the balance. First, by the end of the 1980s the new weapons the United States was developing would be ready for deployment. These alone would improve the picture substantially:

One feature of the window of vulnerability is often overlooked. This is the fact that, although it is opening dangerously now, it will slam hard shut about 1989, when the United States starts deploying its silo-busting MX missile on land and accurate new Trident-2 missiles in its submarines.

Almost overnight, the situation will then be radically changed. All of Russia's land-based missiles--and most of its nuclear armoury consists of land-based missiles--will be vulnerable not only to an American first strike but also to a retaliatory after-a-Russian-first-blow, strike by America's invulnerable submarine missiles. (December 26, 1981, p. 45)

Second, Russia's own internal problems would, in *The Economist's* view, by the end of the 1980s put a limit on its defense expenditures:

Russia will be militarily stronger than the west for much of the 1980s . . . Against that, Russia is likely by the end of the 1980s to be entering a triple crisis of its own, caused by a congenitally incompetent economy, social-cum-racial unrest at home and upheavals in its empire. (November 8, 1980, p. 14)

3. General Statements About the Power Balance

In addition to statements related specifically to the balance of intercontinental forces, *The Economist* referred at various times to a more general balance of power between the United States and the Soviet Union. As Helmut Schmidt stated in a 1979 interview, this broader definition of "strategic" "embraces not only all the military fields but of course also the psychological, the economic fields."¹⁵ *The Economist*, in an editorial in that same issue, noted that:

The Soviet leaders make their calculations about foreign policy on the basis of what they call the "correlation of force"--meaning what other people call the balance of power, but measured in political and psychological terms as well as purely military ones. (October 6, 1979, p. 14)

In this vaguer, psychopolitical sense, too, the United States was generally regarded as "relatively weaker than it used to be."¹⁶ In 1980, for example, following the Soviet move into Afghanistan, *The Economist* wrote:

Mr Carter has discovered how much weaker to draw lines America's hand has become since the last great confrontation with Russia over Cuba in 1962. (March 15, 1980, p. 11)

The United States has lost the military and economic pre-eminence that it enjoyed in the 1950s, and probably can never regain it. (July 12, 1980, p. 13)

By whatever definition one wishes to use, then--whether numbers alone, more general evaluations of intercontinental forces, or overall military-political clout--the United States was portrayed by *The Economist* during 1979-1981 as no longer enjoying the position of superiority it held in the past.

¹⁵*The Economist*, October 6, 1979, p. 48.

¹⁶*The Economist*, November 24, 1979, p. 13.

The loss of a clearcut superiority in intercontinental nuclear forces was seen to place the United States at the mercy of Soviet maneuvering unless and until such time as the military balance was restored. As *The Economist* seemed to view it, Russia's superiority was to give it, for the period of the 1980s at least, a psychological and political advantage:

. . . the danger of "the window of vulnerability" is not that the Russians can be certain of bringing off a successful first strike. It is that the Americans, rightly or wrongly, might think that the Russians could be prepared to risk it. In any great international crisis, that would give the Russians an enormous psychological advantage. They would be readier to use lesser kinds of military force; the Americans would be less ready to reply in kind. Even a theoretical first-strike capability puts a powerful wind in Russia's sails. (October 10, 1981, p. 13)

To say that this combination of superiorities [Russian military superiority in Europe, the Gulf, and approaching ability to destroy U.S. ICBMs in a first strike] is intolerably dangerous is not to say that a Russian president will certainly, or even probably, press the button for that nuclear strike. The mere possibility that he might, coupled with Russia's local superiority in Europe and south-west Asia, is enough for Russian purposes. It makes America more hesitant to stand up to Russian pressure in those regions. It thus makes the countries of those areas more reluctant to rely on American promises of support. The result is that in a crisis Russia could probably get its way by browbeating or, at most, by a limited use of non-nuclear force. The danger lies in these psycho-political consequences--what Mr Helmut Schmidt calls the "subliminal effect" of Russian nuclear superiority. (November 14, 1981, p. 13)

B. FACTORS SHAPING *THE ECONOMIST'S* IMAGE OF THE STRATEGIC BALANCE

The question quite naturally arises as to just what *The Economist* based its judgment of the balance upon. Close examination reveals that *The Economist's* Cassandra-like warnings about the 1980s were not prompted solely by a perceived imbalance in the number and characteristics of intercontinental missiles on each side. Basic though this was, a number of other factors, military and nonmilitary, can be identified as having fed the overall image of the balance that was conveyed in the pages of *The Economist* during the three years covered by this study. Some of the factors discussed below are, of course, more important than others; but all of them contributed to some extent to the picture that emerged: a picture of a United States that the Soviet Union would be in a position during the 1980s to push around, unless the United States took certain remedial actions.

1. Military Factors

Military factors were, of course, of capital importance in the perception process. But, as will be seen, certain aspects of the military picture proved more important than others in shaping the image of the balance.

a. **Strategic Forces.** In its discussions of the strategic balance, *The Economist* considered various aspects of the strategic forces on both sides. Some dimensions weighed heavily in the assessment; others received relatively little attention.

(1) *Salt-2 and the Number of Intercontinental Weapons.*

Fundamental to the assessment process, of course, were quantitative factors such as number of launchers, number of warheads, megatonnage, and throwweight.

For several years Russia has outreached the United States in most measures of nuclear strength--megatons of explosive power . . . numbers of missiles and the total weight that can be lifted to target. Only in numbers of warheads has the United States remained ahead. But even this last American advantage is rapidly disappearing as the Russians deploy large numbers of independently targetable re-entry vehicles on their big new missiles. (August 9, 1980, p. 36)

Much of the discussion that filled the pages of *The Economist* during 1979 was occasioned by the Salt-2 talks and the resulting treaty. This focused attention on the number of weapons in specific categories, and on what the situation would be in 1985 when the treaty was due to expire. *The Economist* acknowledged that "Salt-2 . . . does go most of the way towards establishing the principle that each side may have the same number of major nuclear weapons."¹⁷ But it regarded the treaty as seriously flawed: "The disturbing main exception to this principle of equality is the provision which allows the Russians to have 308 super-big missiles, and the United States none."¹⁸ This built-in imbalance, on top of an existing Soviet lead in missiles, and the expected rate of production on both sides produced a negative forecast for the United States in the strategic balance of 1985:

On the surface, the proposed new treaty is neatly balanced; but it conceals, just under the surface, a large imbalance in Russia's favor . . . it lays down exactly equal permitted totals for each side: 2,250 nuclear launching vehicles of all kinds, of which 1,320 can carry Mirv multiple warheads or cruise missiles, and so on down through various sub-sections.

But in fact, whereas the current Soviet missile-building programme will have no difficulty in filling most of the permitted totals, the existing American armoury and present American building plans mean that by 1985 the United States will be behind Russia both in the overall total and in some of the most important sub-categories. (The most striking example is "modern large" missiles, where the Russians will be allowed to keep their 308 huge 10-warhead SS-18s but the Americans will have none at all.) . . . By 1985, the Russians could have a lead of more than 3 to 1 in the total number of megatons that can be dropped on the other side, and 7 to 1 in megatons carried in land-based missiles; in consequence, a lead of 3 to 2 in their ability to destroy protected targets such as missile silos; and a lead of more than 2 to 1 in their ability to destroy unprotected targets, such as cities. (December 30, 1978, p. 7)

When President Carter foolishly signed the Salt-2 treaty in Vienna in 1979, he accepted a large American disadvantage. Salt-2 allowed Russia more delivery vehicles than the

¹⁷*The Economist*, June 23, 1979, p. 13.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

Americans had, or could build during the treaty's lifetime. This Russian advantage included a monopoly of heavy missiles, which can carry enough accurate warheads for the Russians to be able to look forward to a theoretical possibility of knocking out America's land-based missiles. That knockout would leave the American president to decide whether he should launch his (less accurate) submarine missiles at Russia's cities, in the certainty that America's cities would be obliterated immediately thereafter. (July 25, 1981, p. 12)

(2) *Weapon Characteristics.* In its assessment of the strategic balance, *The Economist* gave considerable weight to the characteristics of weapons.

Size. *The Economist* stated many times that the Soviets were being handed an advantage in the Salt-2 agreement by being permitted 308 10-warhead missiles while the United States was to have none:

There is no question that, mainly because of the size of its missiles, Russia will come to surpass the United States in most categories of nuclear strength--including deliverable megatonnage and the number of missile warheads--during the life of the Salt-2 treaty. (July 23, 1979, p. 14)

Accuracy. As *The Economist* described the situation, the Soviets appeared to enjoy a considerable advantage over the United States as regards the accuracy of their intercontinental weapons. There were many references to the "accurate and reliable" warheads in the Soviet arsenal that represented a distinct and temporarily unanswerable threat to U.S. land-based missiles:

Russian advances in size and accuracy of missiles will render the present fixed Minuteman and Titan ICBM force vulnerable to a surprise attack in the early 1980s. (June 16, 1979, p. 40)

For several years Russia has out-reached the United States in most measures of nuclear strength . . . The future is no brighter. Although Russia will probably not catch up with the United States in total number of warheads by 1985, it will remain well ahead in reliable and accurate warheads even after the United States has deployed its super-accurate air-launched cruise missiles, now entering production. (August 9, 1980, p. 37)

Russia's new multi-warhead missiles are accurate enough to destroy American missiles in their silos. Some time soon, perhaps next year, there will be enough of these accurate new Russian warheads to threaten America's entire land-based missile force. This will be the beginning of a dangerous time. The United States must find a way to protect its missiles. (July 18, 1981, p. 34)

At the moment . . . the Russians are on the verge of being able to destroy the most important part of the American nuclear force--the accurate counter-attack missiles sitting in silos in the United States itself--virtually without warning. There is little doubt that Russia's warheads will soon be precise and reliable enough to do just that. (November 14, 1981, p. 13)

In one article, *The Economist* explained that only those warheads "on land-based ballistic missiles and cruise missiles" were counted as "reliable and accurate."¹⁹ The oft-stated Soviet advantage in accuracy thus stemmed from the fact that the Soviet Union had more land-based missiles than the United States. However, *The Economist* did not make this point explicit on all occasions and statements such as those cited above may well have imparted the impression that Soviet warheads in general were more accurate than their American counterparts, or that, specifically, the Soviet Union's ICBMs were more accurate than those of the United States.²⁰

¹⁹This definition appeared in a long article in the August 9, 1980, issue on "Nato and the Warsaw Pact," p. 36. The article contained a number of charts. These showed both the number of warheads and the number of "reliable and accurate" warheads on each side. When the graphs are converted into numbers, they yield the following information:

Weapon	1979		1980		1981	
	U.S.	USSR	U.S.	USSR	U.S.	USSR
Long-range warheads	9,000	5,000	9,000	6,500	9,000	7,000
Reliable and accurate warheads	2,100	4,100	2,100	4,200	2,100	4,800

²⁰It is of some interest to note that *The Economist* paid little attention to the difference in the relative importance of the fixed land-based component in the American and Russian forces.

Accuracy was also an element in the assessment of U.S. retaliatory capability. The *lack* of accuracy inherent to submarine-launched missiles prevented this arm of the U.S. triad from appearing to serve as a counterweight to the Soviet advantage in land-based missiles. The point was drummed home by *The Economist*: SLBMs because of their lack of accuracy could not be used to knock out Russia's unused land-based missiles after a possible Soviet first strike.

. . . submarine-launched missiles are still not accurate enough to do the job of hitting Russian silos . . . (June 14, 1980, p. 18)

The problem is that, if a Russian first strike did wipe out the land-based missiles, America's surviving bombers and submarine-launched missiles are not accurate enough to hit back at the unused portion of Russia's missile force. (August 16, 1980, p. 9)

[If Russia destroyed all U.S. land-based missiles in a first strike] some of America's submarine missiles would be left untouched. But these are not accurate enough to destroy Russia's reserve of unused missiles. (August 29, 1981, p. 16)

Speed. In two respects, U.S. dependence on long-range bombers also served to weaken American standing in the strategic balance for *The Economist*. Most important, according to *The Economist*, they would be too slow to be effective:

[After a possible Russian first strike] the surviving American submarines and bombers would still be available for a counter-attack, but they would be too inaccurate or too slow, to destroy Russia's reserve of still unused warheads. (September 8, 1979, p. 15)

Second, it was, of course, also recalled on occasion that manned bombers would "have a much smaller chance of getting through than missiles do."²¹

²¹*The Economist*, August 9, 1980, p. 36.

Thus, in evaluating the strategic balance, it was not just the number of Soviet multiple-warhead missiles that made *The Economist* perceive them as such a threat to U.S. missiles in their fixed silos. It was the size, increased accuracy and reliability of these Russian weapons compared with the current status of weapons on the U.S. side that occasioned concern.

The Soviet advantage was perceived as probably being relatively short-lived, however. *The Economist* presumed that U.S. plans to deploy the MX and Trident-2 missiles at the end of the 1980s would restore some semblance of balance:

An effective American second-strike force needs missiles which are invulnerable to a Russian first strike and also accurate enough to hit Russian silos and other pinpoint targets. Two such weapons, the MX mobile land-based missile and a Trident submarine-launched one, are planned for the second half of the 1980s . . . (August 16, 1980, p. 9)

The Trident-2 will have a long range of around 6,000 miles, depending on how heavy a payload it carries. It can carry more warheads and bigger ones than its predecessor, and it can land them with enough accuracy to destroy even hardened missile silos. (October 10, 1981, p. 31)

(3) *Qualitative Aspects of Military Capability.* With the exception of communications, the qualitative aspects of military capability--leadership, motivation, command and control, intelligence operations, training, and maintenance--received far less attention than weapon characteristics in *The Economist*'s discussions of the strategic balance.

The problem of communicating with the U.S. strategic submarine force was considered a serious defect in the current effectiveness of this arm of the American deterrent triad. Communicating with submarines was referred to as "still a dicey business,"²² "tricky"²³ and therefore not reliable in a crisis.

²²*The Economist*, August 16, 1980, p. 9.

²³*The Economist*, October 10, 1981, pp. 13-14.

. . . communications with the American missile submarines could be made nearly impossible if the Russian attack had damaged vital pieces of America's control system. (December 26, 1981, p. 44)

It was hoped that this problem would be corrected by the end of the 1980s:

By 1989 the Trident-2 will be available, with the necessary accuracy . . . The communications problem could also be solved by then. (October 10, 1981, p. 14)

(4) *Offense vs Defense Capabilities*. Possibly also due to the Salt-2 negotiations, which seemed to focus attention on offensive forces, defensive matters received little attention. As inspection of the Tabular Summary²⁴ will show, there were very few statements in *The Economist* during 1979-1981 that bore on ABM or civil defense.

In an article about British civil defense which took note of the fact that "Russia has made substantial civil defence preparations,"²⁵ the absence of such preparations in the United States was attributed to a belief that such steps would be destabilizing:

In the United States, civil defence used to be criticised as likely to "destabilise the nuclear standoff"--ie, make Russia think that the United States was seriously preparing for nuclear war, and make the country's leaders a bit less reluctant to press the button if it appeared the United States could actually weather a nuclear war. (February 23, 1980, p. 62)

But, as Norman Macrae, *The Economist*'s deputy editor, pointed out in a long article discussing "President Reagan's Inheritance:"

The existence of [rural Russia's extensive underground shelters] makes the nuclear option less terrifying to Russia than it is to the west, although the west has never understood this. (December 27, 1980, p. 16)

²⁴See Appendix A.

²⁵*The Economist*, February 23, 1980, p. 63.

This would suggest that the lack of a civil defense program in the United States appears misguided to *The Economist* and another deficit for the United States.

b. Conventional Forces. In evaluating the military balance, *The Economist* tended to speak in the same breath of nuclear and nonnuclear forces; one could not be considered without the other. Nonnuclear forces were, in effect, a part of the definition of strength:

Russia will be militarily stronger than the west for much of the 1980s (meaning that it can deploy stronger non-nuclear forces in southern Asia, central Europe and northern Africa than the west can, and has neutralised the west's former nuclear counterweight). (November 8, 1980, p. 14)

This view was based on the conviction that, having achieved nuclear parity, the Soviets would use their nonnuclear power to serve aggressive ends. This opinion was stated quite clearly at the beginning of 1979 and appeared repeatedly thereafter:

The nuclear balance, or imbalance, is the starting-point of every international political calculation. But there are other factors at work, too, which could tip the balance even more steeply against the west.

There is the competition in nonnuclear military power, where Russia is also trying to establish its claim to be *primus inter pares*. . . . the loss of the old American nuclear superiority makes it even more necessary for the west to match the Russians in non-nuclear forces anywhere, if it is not to find itself faced down in one local confrontation after another. (December 30, 1978, p. 9)

. . . the evident superiority in nuclear weight they [the Russians] will acquire in the early 1980s, plus their growing superiority in non-nuclear weapons, may tempt them to put intolerable pressure on the west at various vulnerable points in Asia, Africa and Latin America. (June 23, 1979, p. 14)

Russia's arrival at nuclear equality with the United States means that it is in a position to use its huge non-nuclear superiority in south-west Asia, and its growing non-nuclear lead in Europe, without the old assumption that this would almost certainly lead to nuclear war. (July 12, 1980, p. 12)

Russia has neutralised America's former nuclear advantage and will therefore be in a position to use its own non-nuclear superiority in Asia and Europe in the service of a buccaneering foreign policy. Soviet apparatchiks younger than Mr Brezhnev may quite like to do that: they suspect that Polish-style revolts may one day break out against the Soviet Union's own privilights unless they set about humbling both America and China quickly. (December 27, 1980, p. 7)

To accept parity in nuclear weapons makes it necessary to build parity in non-nuclear ones: otherwise Russian tanks and infantry will win wars under the canopy of the deadlocked missiles. (January 3, 1981, p. 9)

The Soviet arms build-up, by cancelling America's previous nuclear superiority while increasing Russia's non-nuclear lead, means that a successful Soviet invasion of western Europe is no longer thinkable. (February 28, 1981, p. 13)

. . . nuclear equality means that Russia cannot be allowed to have superiority in the non-nuclear weapons which nuclear equality enables it to use. (June 6, 1981, p. 12)

The Russians and their allies have more ordinary non-nuclear armed power in Europe than the Americans and their allies have, and can rapidly put a lot more such power into a large stretch of southern Asia (including the Gulf oil fields) than the west can. They have more short-range "battlefield" nuclear missiles and nuclear-armed aircraft. They have a big lead in medium-range nuclear weapons. And they will soon have a lead in long-range nuclear arms . . . It takes a great deal of innocence, or self-deception, to believe that the Russians will not one day brandish this combination of superiorities to impose their will in some future crisis in Europe, the Gulf or wherever. (July 25, 1981, p. 11)

If Russia can add a nuclear monopoly in Europe to its existing superiority in non-nuclear weapons--meanwhile holding the Americans at arms' length with its impending superiority in intercontinental missiles--its chances of getting a respectfully subordinate western Europe are excellent. (August 8, 1981, p. 10)

The Economist's own position on this point was buttressed by statements of public figures. It was reported that Senator Nunn believed that "To

preserve . . . stability, neither side can afford to look weaker, taking conventional and nuclear strength as a whole and including forces in Europe."²⁶ And, in an interview, Helmut Schmidt said that by the 1970s:

it was more or less bound to become unthinkable that the Americans would apply their diminishing, shrinking, withering inter-continental superiority in order to correct all situations which might arise in the future in other fields. Already in 1969 I asked for an adequate equilibrium, military equilibrium, on other levels and in other areas of defence. . . . In the late 1960s, American governments started in to think in terms of parity in the inter-continental strategic fields which should have, by pure logic, led them to understand that, if they engaged in negotiations which were meant to lead to a situation of parity in the inter-continental field, they should also do something about the field in which they were inferior, like the field of the SS-4s, SS-5s, nowadays SS-20s. (October 6, 1979, p. 49)

The successful outcome of the Cuban missile crisis was cited as evidence that nonnuclear power was critical in dealing with the Soviet Union:

Kennedy outfaced Krushchev in the Cuba missile crisis because America then had far more nuclear weapons than Russia and, except around the borders of Russia itself, far more non-nuclear military power as well. (June 9, 1979, p. 11)

In order to forestall the anticipated Soviet aggression, it was deemed necessary for the United States and western Europe to beef up their military capability, the current status of which was said to be greatly inferior to that of the Warsaw Pact countries. *Economist* editorials urged²⁷ that all concerned take action to restore the nuclear and nonnuclear balance lest serious consequences ensue:²⁸

²⁶*The Economist*, May 12, 1979, p. 51.

²⁷See Appendix D for some comments on *The Economist's* perception of its own role in international relations.

²⁸The following excerpts are intended to illustrate the point. The subject of NATO and the European theater was not, however, within the province of the present study.

The members of the Nato alliance have agreed to increase their defence spending by 3% a year, but some of them are already showing signs of defaulting. It is necessary not only that this 3% should be honoured but that those countries which can afford it should move on to 4-5% a year. The money is needed not only to make sure that Russia does not take the lead in the nuclear balance of power but, just as important, to prevent the Russians from getting a local non-nuclear lead in any important part of the world which they could exploit under the umbrella of nuclear parity. (January 12, 1980, p. 14)

The physical expansion of Soviet power must be checked. By maintaining a balance of both nuclear and non-nuclear forces, and by raising the risks to the Russians of military adventurism, Mr Reagan can instil new caution in the Soviet leadership. (May 23, 1981, p. 18)

The only chance of blocking this emerging Soviet military superiority is a rapid American-led programme of western rearmament that can push the west closer to non-nuclear parity with Russia where that is important (especially in the Gulf) while reintroducing a touch of nuclear doubt into Russian calculations. (December 27, 1980, p. 7)

(1) *Quality of Weapons.* It is not simply that the Soviet Union had superiority in numbers of weapons arrayed against the forces of the West that occasioned *The Economist's* concern. The quality of the weapons on each side was a significant component. According to *The Economist*, it was no longer possible or wise to assume that western superiority in quality²⁹ could compensate for a Soviet superiority in

²⁹The U.S. image of quality was not enhanced when a Titan missile exploded in its silo in September 1980. On that occasion, *The Economist* wrote: "On top of a long accumulation of vaguely depressing news about the condition of the American defence establishment, a huge explosion destroyed a Titan intercontinental missile and its silo at Damascus, Arkansas, on the night of September 18th. . . . the Titan had already chalked up a grisly history of leaks and mishaps before this latest appalling event. The question has arisen whether the Titan is not, perhaps, a lemon . . . Mr Harold Brown duly maintained in a television talk show on Sunday that the Titan, in spite of its age of more than 15 years, was still operable and still effective; but he added that plans existed to replace the Titan with the solid-fuelled MX rocket. That will take many years to come about, and meantime the Titan with its leak-prone skin, its charge of 100 tons of fearfully volatile liquid fuel, and its gigantic warhead with a force of 750 Hiroshima bombs, appears likely to continue to present problems. (September 27, 1980, p. 37)

numbers of weapons:

People in the west, observing that Russia and its Warsaw pact allies have more of almost every sort of military power than Nato does, have long been tempted to believe that this communist advantage in sheer numbers can be cancelled out by "other factors"--morale, quality of equipment, political will, what have you. Western governments, asking their parliaments for defence budgets which provide less than the Russians have of almost everything, argue that superior western quality can somehow overcome Russia's big battalions.

There are three things wrong with this quality-beats-quantity fallacy: (a) nobody really knows what "quality" is (and westerners tend to think of it as synonymous with advanced technology, which sometimes results in complex gadgets that break down frequently if not maintained by highly trained technicians); (b) the Russians are making rapid improvements in the performance of almost all of their weapons, and are rapidly overtaking Nato in technological excellence; and (c) Voltaire was probably right ["God is always on the side of the big battalions"]. (August 9, 1980, p. 35)

According to *The Economist*, then, the improved accuracy of Soviet long-range intercontinental missiles was believed to be matched by an across-the-board improvement in weapon performance and technological excellence. By contrast, *The Economist* conveyed a fair amount of negative information about U.S. weaponry, some of it based on its own evaluation, some stemming from U.S. self-criticism.³⁰

The Economist criticized a tendency on the part of the United States to go overboard on sophisticated weapons that are very expensive to produce, difficult to operate and maintain and, as deputy editor Norman Macrae wrote, developed at the cost of not filling more mundane needs:

³⁰While *The Economist* seems to emphasize the difficulties the United States has made for itself by applying advanced technology to its weapons systems, no such problems are mentioned in connection with the Soviets' development of their more sophisticated weapons. This may simply be due to the fact that such information is available in the United States and not available in the Soviet Union. But it may also be another instance of *The Economist* taking a certain satisfaction in pointing out the blemishes in the United States. See Part II, "The Space Race," pp. 70ff.

Because there is recognition that the Soviet Union now has a preponderance of sophisticated weapons, the last congress started after fiscal 1978 to build up America's new weaponry. . . . The average cost overrun on 54 major weapons systems being produced by the defence department was nearly 70% above the original estimate by 1979. On very sophisticated aircraft like the F-14, as much as 90 maintenance manhours can be spent for every hour of flight by the aircraft.

Worse, the swing back to some sophistication in weaponry has been at the expense of inadequate provision of less glamorous supplies. If a Soviet assault were launched in Europe, the American army in Germany would run out of ammunition within 25 days (and it would take around 60 days to get factories started on making significantly more ammunition). The whole American air force has only 15% of the war-reserve spare parts it needs. (December 27, 1980, p. 18)

This position was given some support from within the United States by Pentagon analyst Franklin Spinney's *Defense Facts of Life* in which the stress on high technology weapons systems was shown to be self-defeating. Possibly because it coincided with *The Economist's* own views, the content of this document was reported in some detail:

Mr Spinney points out that the armed forces have been investing in ever more complicated weapons over the past 30 years . . . From 1973 to 1980 the budget for fighter planes grew at an annual average rate of 10.4% in real terms. In those years the air force invested no less than \$52 billion in new equipment in this area. The result, however, has been a decline both in numbers of aircraft and in readiness. Quite simply, the more the air force has invested in sophisticated aircraft and support equipment, the less ready it is to fight a war. For example, the F-15, a complex fighter, is "non-mission capable" 44% of the time. The F-111D, which carries some even more sophisticated electronic equipment, is out of action 67% of the time. (February 7, 1981, pp. 24, 27)

According to the Spinney report, *The Economist* pointed out, the manpower shortage which was one of the rationales for developing the high technology systems has not been relieved either:

One argument for this greater reliance on high technology weapons systems has been the shortage of manpower. . . . Demands on manpower for maintenance have increased by 40%

since the early 1960s. The F-15 has its breakdowns diagnosed by "black boxes" on board: these are then removed to be analysed with the help of an advanced computer which needs a highly skilled man to operate it. In the last three months of 1980, 33 of these precious personnel . . . came up for re-enlistment. Not one chose to sign on again.

The exodus of pilots from the air force has been well publicised--the loss rate was 65% last year, up from 25% in 1976. . . . They are leaving . . . because they are not able to do much flying. Too many of those smart aircraft are sitting on the tarmac. (February 7, 1981, p. 27)

(2) *Quality of Manpower.* Occasional references were made by *The Economist* to the quality of U.S. military manpower. The poor performance of U.S. army recruits was highlighted in a 1980 article:

In fiscal 1979 about 45% of recruits to the American army were classified in the lowest intelligence category 4 (which means dummies). Over 60% of the army's recruits come from the 11% of American adults who do not have a high school diploma. In 1979 some 98% of the American army's tank repairmen failed in proficiency tests for their own military jobs, as did 91% of its aviation maintenance personnel. Only three categories passed their tests completely, one of which was the army's three bassoon players. (December 27, 1980, p. 17)

Morale and discipline were also believed to be problems:

There is a tendency in the Reagan camp to believe that a bigger defence budget will by itself solve America's balance-of-power-with-Russia problems. This ignores the fact that the American armed forces are having severe trouble with morale and discipline. (July 12, 1980, p. 12)

Some improvement was noted on both these counts, however, in 1981:

. . . the quality of manpower in the [U.S.] armed forces at last shows unmistakable signs of improving. Last year's pay rise (another is due in October) and higher morale have boosted recruiting and the rate at which experienced servicemen re-enlist. (September 12, 1981, p. 18)

Little was said about Soviet manpower in the military, except for a mention of potential problems stemming from the growing proportion of non-Russians in the Soviet military force.³¹

³¹For example, in enumerating the problems the Russians would be

c. **Military Spending.** The amount of money allocated to defense was viewed as critical to the relative standing of the two sides. *The Economist* stated its position on this point in its article on "Nato and the Warsaw Pact:"

Money is not a weapon, but it is the basis of all military power: a measure of what is being produced at the moment, an indication of what will be available in the future and a strong clue to the political will behind it all. The sustained growth of Russian defence spending over the past 15 years is one of the most alarming features of its policy towards the west. (August 9, 1980, p. 35)

As indicated in the passage quoted above, *The Economist* believes that expenditures for defense can be read as signals of intentions. In describing the ways in which the United States could allocate its funds to improve its defenses, for example, *The Economist* wrote:

Bringing the B-1 back would not only strengthen the American forces: it would also be a signal that the United States has stopped being naive. (September 8, 1979, p. 16)

Similarly, it read Soviet defense spending as an indication of Russia's offensive intentions:

The steady 3-5% a year programme of Soviet rearmament that Mr Brezhnev ordered in the mid-1960s, after Khrushchev's failures in Berlin and Cuba, is meant to ensure that the Brezhnev offensive succeeds where the Khrushchev one failed. (January 3, 1981, p. 7)

There were innumerable references to the fact that the Soviets had long been outspending the United States and the West on the military:

facing at the end of the 1980s, *The Economist* concluded with the statement: "Worst of all, perhaps . . . by the end of the century, on present trends, one in three of the young men conscripted into the Soviet army will come from . . . [the] explosive [Moslem] southern area." (September 8, 1979, p. 17)

. . . the recent growth in Soviet nuclear power--to the point where it will be able, by around 1982, to destroy almost all America's land-based missiles at a single stroke . . . is the product of Russia's mammoth weapons-building programme over the past decade, which a United States wrangling with itself spectacularly failed to match or counter. (June 23, 1979, p. 13)

Military spending is now taking somewhere between 11% and 18% of the Soviet Union's gnp . . . compared with 5.2% of America's, 4.9% of Britain's, 3.3% of West Germany's and 4% of France's. . . .

The CIA's dollar comparison between Russia and the United States . . . [shows that] the crossover point between the two countries came in 1971, and the margin has been widening ever since as Russian outlays have continued to grow at 3-5% a year in constant prices, while those of the United States have declined. By the end of the 1970s the dollar cost of Russian military spending was 50% higher than that of the United States . . . (August 9, 1980, pp. 35-36)

The Economist expected this imbalance to continue. At the beginning of 1979 it concluded that, the limitations of the Salt agreement notwithstanding, "present American building plans mean that by 1985 the United States will be behind Russia both in the overall total and in some of the most important sub-categories [of missiles]." ³² This suggests that, at that time, *The Economist* anticipated no major increases in U.S. defense spending. The theme of the disparity between U.S. and Soviet defense spending continued even after President Reagan's recommended increases:

The Soviet Union's gnp is little more than half of America's, but the Russians already spend 11-13% of theirs on defence. By 1986, even with President Reagan's defence programme, America should still be spending little more than 7%. (August 8, 1981, p. 14)

Nonetheless, the increases in the U.S. defense budget that Carter introduced after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and that Reagan added to, were interpreted by *The Economist* as an indication of "new-found determination," ³³ renewed resolve and will on the part of the

³²*The Economist*, December 30, 1978, p. 7.

³³*The Economist*, December 26, 1981, p. 42.

United States:

America's friends are reassured that it is in earnest in its determination to build its defences. (July 4, 1981, p. 16)

d. **Doctrine.** Assumptions about doctrine also play a part in the complicated equation of the strategic balance.

The Economist appeared to have a clear idea of what Soviet doctrine was. In a comparison of U.S. and Soviet policy on this point, *The Economist* stated:

Mutual assured destruction has never appealed to the Russians. . . .

. . . the Soviet Officers' Handbook issued by the ministry of defence in Moscow, [states that] the best way to avoid nuclear war is to be prepared to fight one. The "prime task" is "preparing for and waging war" and ultimately achieving victory. Active defence (*oborona*), not deterrence (the word exists in Russian--*ustrashenie*--but is seldom used), is the cornerstone of Soviet strategy. In the stark prose of the Officers' Handbook: "Soviet military doctrine is offensive in character".

. . . Soviet military journals encourage their readers to make use of the "achievements of scientific-technical progress" and the resulting "weapons of varying power". Some of those weapons . . . "are capable of doing considerable damage to a continent, others only to individual states. . . . Still others lead to the defeat of the enemy's armed forces without doing essential injury to the economy or population". (August 16, 1980, pp. 38-39)

Impressions about U.S. doctrine were not as clear. In August, 1980, when President Carter issued Directive 59, an *Economist* editorial interpreted it as a sudden doctrinal change brought about by the relative military weakness of the United States vis-à-vis the Soviet Union:

If you wish to prevent somebody doing A to you, by threatening to do B to him if he does, you first make sure that the threat of B is plausible. President Carter has chosen to change American policy on the targeting of nuclear weapons . . . Presidential Directive 59 will make it possible for America's nuclear forces to strike at Soviet missile silos instead of at

Soviet cities. It will ensure that the nuclear deterrent can continue to deter.

Change is necessary because the old policy has been made obsolete by the growth of Russia's missile power. . . . Russia is approaching the time when its expanding missile force . . . may be able to destroy virtually all America's land-based missiles at a blow, and still leave a lot of Russia's missiles unused. . . .

The defenders of the old policy (who until recently included Mr Carter) argue that "city-busting" is a good enough deterrent. The critics, now including Mr Carter, reply that it is not, because the Russians would know--and would know the Americans knew--that those unused Russian missiles would then be able to obliterate the United States.

In the terrifying logic of the nuclear exchange, this certainty of a Russian third strike would paralyse the American second strike which is supposed to deter the Russian first strike. (August 16, 1980, p. 9)

An article in the "American Survey" section of the same issue, however, explained that Directive 59 was not the abrupt change the editorial implied:

[The administration's] revised missile-targeting doctrine was announced last week in unofficial but plainly well-informed press reports. More of the American strategic arsenal, they said, is to be aimed at Russian missile silos and military command centres, the better to deter nuclear war. . . .

. . . the change in policy is more "evolutionary" than abrupt. Even though the administration has done its best to make it seem like a sudden lurch, this was not so. In his campaign four years ago, Mr Carter was openly sceptical about the notion he has now espoused, although it was then gaining favour among some defence intellectuals. On election, he asked his secretary-to-be, Mr Brown, to see if the American arsenal could be cut from 1,800 missiles to 200. The threat of destroying each other's major cities should be enough, Mr Carter then apparently believed, to prevent either side from starting a nuclear war. In the Ford administration, thinking had already gone the other way. Mr James Schlesinger proposed counterforce targeting in 1974, when he was at the Pentagon. Under Mr Carter, Messrs Brown and Brzezinski have become converts to the same idea. (August 16, 1980, p. 22)

A certain ambiguity existed also regarding U.S. policy about "launch-on-warning." Following a false alert, *The Economist* reported agreement that "launch-on-warning" was not considered seriously by the United States:

One thing the [false] alert proved . . . is that the system works: the fighters can get off fast and, perhaps more important, errors get caught, also fast. But the main lesson is that the system is not foolproof enough for the United States seriously to consider the tactic known as "launch on warning". And that is not likely to change as long as there are buttons for humans to push. (November 17, 1979, p. 33)

However, in the same article, *The Economist* reported that Secretary of Defense Brown intended to keep the Russians guessing on this point:

In supporting the administration's arguments for Salt-2, Mr Harold Brown, the secretary of defence, has assured the senate that the Russians can never be sure whether the United States will actually launch on warning. (November 17, 1979, p. 33)

After two more false alarms, in 1980, *The Economist* reverted to the position that the policy of launch-on-warning was dead:

The . . . lesson to be learned from these false alarms is that the idea known as "launch on warning" is madness. The Russians are nearing the point at which they will be able to destroy all America's land-based missiles at a blow, by using only a portion of their own force. If they should launch such a first strike, the American president--realising that his remaining (submarine-launched) missiles are not accurate enough to destroy the unused Russian missiles in their silos--would then have the awful choice of either (a) retaliating against Russian cities and thereby causing the Russians to blast American cities in return, or (b) accepting defeat.

It has been suggested that the Americans could avoid that intolerable choice by telling the Russians that they proposed to "launch on warning"--that is, release America's land-based missiles against the silo targets in the Soviet Union once Russia's missiles were seen to be on their way, but before they had landed. The experience of three false warnings has exploded the concept. (June 14, 1980, p. 18)

The way *The Economist* described the U.S. position regarding "launch-under-attack" made it appear that the United States was of two minds on this point as well. In discussing a CBS-TV five-part series on American defense, *The Economist* stated:

The programme reveals that concern about the vulnerability of America's land-based missiles has already led the Reagan administration to focus new attention on the principle of launch-under-attack, that is, launching some American missiles the moment the first Russian missiles explode but before the scope of the attack is known. Launch-under-attack has never been official policy, though it is practised each year in war games. (June 13, 1981, p. 26)³⁴

2. Nonmilitary Factors

Information about the size and quality of military arsenals is neither given nor received in a vacuum. For both *The Economist* and its readers, such data are but a single dimension of a vast, complex, interdependent and constantly changing picture. And it is obvious as one goes through the pages of *The Economist* that assessments of the strategic balance are not based exclusively on military information. On the contrary, a variety of other factors such as international political behavior, and cultural and economic characteristics can be identified as modifying *The Economist's* view of the balance.

Some of the nonmilitary factors that helped shape the image of the U.S.-Soviet balance that *The Economist* projected will be examined in the pages that follow.

a. **Behavior.** It is a truism that in relations between nations, as in other arenas, actions speak louder than words in conveying impressions of weakness or strength.³⁵ The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was an assertion of strength. The U.S. pronouncement that a brigade of Soviet soldiers in Cuba was "unacceptable,"³⁶ followed shortly thereafter by acceptance of its presence, was regarded as "a display of national impotence:"

³⁴If uncertainty about U.S. doctrine is considered desirable, it would seem to have been achieved. If not, these findings suggest to the present writer a need for greater coherence in the U.S. presentation of its position.

³⁵Evidence of the impact of events on *The Economist's* reporting can be found in Appendix C, which presents the results of a tabulation of military and nonmilitary items in a sample of issues for the years 1979-1981.

³⁶*The Economist*, September 15, 1979, p. 38.

. . . umpteen diplomatic meetings later and after vain conversations on the hot line to Moscow . . . The status quo is still maintained and the administration is having to accept the unacceptable, and adapt to it. . . . The United States could well do without such a display of national impotence. (October 6, 1979, p. 13)

U.S. impotence was further displayed during the Tehran hostage crisis. It was in connection with the problem of finding a way to put pressure on the Ayatollah Khomeini that *The Economist* was moved to describe the United States as "relatively weaker than it used to be."³⁷ The failure of the U.S. rescue attempt did nothing to polish the American image. In an editorial, the title of which alone bespeaks its conclusion--"Shrunken America"--*The Economist* pointed out the disquieting consequences of the failure for U.S. influence:

The United States, conqueror of the moon and outer space, is humiliated. . . . [For the Gulf countries] The shiver at the sight of a restored American will to act was healthy, but the Carterian incompetence of the operation has not heightened their respect for America; memories of the Shah's downfall must now be mingled in the minds of many leaders in the Gulf with memories of tangled American helicopters and burnt-out transport aeroplanes.

Gulf states less confident in America are Gulf states more ready to contemplate accommodation with the Soviet Union. . . .

America's other main objective, containment of the Soviet Union, has at the same time been set back. Iran has been pushed closer to Russia . . . And meanwhile the spotlight of world attention has been removed from [the Soviet's] illegal occupation of Afghanistan and focused instead on the wholly legitimate but hapless American mission to free the hostages. In making a monkey out of America, the ayatollah--with Jimmy Carter his accomplice--has widened the smile on the face of the Russian bear. . . .

When President Carter decided on that gamble he had four things to gain: the liberation of the hostages, a propaganda coup for the United States, a demonstration of the lesson that the United States would not allow itself to be pushed around indefinitely, and his own re-election as president next autumn. When the president chose to gamble and lost, the first two aims were gone, the last two left up in the air. (May 3, 1980, pp. 15-16)

³⁷*The Economist*, November 24, 1979, p. 13.

Clearly, in *The Economist's* eyes, U.S. behavior, especially under Carter, did little to inspire confidence in its allies or trepidation in its enemies.

b. Image of the United States. *The Economist's* image of the man in the White House, as well as certain other characteristics of U.S. political life, affected the way in which it assessed the strategic balance.

(1) *The President.* Prior to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, sarcasm seemed to be the dominant note in *The Economist's* descriptions of President Jimmy Carter and his actions. Inconsistencies in his decisions were the object of comment:

The flexible Mr Carter cancelled the sale of an advanced computer to the Russian press agency, Tass, but at the same time permitted a \$144m sale of oil-drilling technology manufactured by Dresser Industries of Dallas. (January 6, 1979, p. 20)

His ineptitude in handling foreign policy was ridiculed:

. . . accidents will happen, especially to Jimmy Carter.

Just as the prospect for the senate ratification of the second strategic arms limitation treaty, Salt-2, were improving a little, this wretched brigade of Soviet troops turns up in Cuba. No matter that it has been there for years . . . No matter that the troops do not pose any military threat to the United States. And no matter that a squadron of Mig-23s was discovered in Cuba last November, to which nobody in the administration paid much attention . . . The senate, with a third of its members up for re-election next year . . . will never ratify Salt if 2,000-3,000 Russians are carousing unchecked just 150 miles off the coast of Florida.

Something must be done, and here Jimmy Carter the Accident-prone is overtaken by Jimmy Carter the Incompetent: instead of coming out of this episode with an enhanced reputation for being able to cope in a crisis, he has emerged looking an even lamer duck than before . . . (October 6, 1979, p. 13)

What it all added up to was a lack of confidence in Carter's ability to stand up to the Russians. *The Economist* criticized Carter's "failure to bargain adamantly enough" on the Salt-2 treaty. They felt that he

should have stuck to his demand that the Russians halve the number of their SS-18 missiles. "Instead, the Russians shook their heads and he backed down." As a consequence, *The Economist* maintained, Europeans "are not confident of Mr Carter's ability to defy Russia."³⁸

President Carter gained some ground immediately after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan when his actions against the Soviet Union earned him praise as "the new pugnacious Carter:"

With the falling of the scales from his eyes came the grain embargo, the export ban, the shelving of Salt-2, the curtailment of diplomatic exchanges, renewed aid for Pakistan, the search for bases in the Middle East, the official boycott of the Moscow Olympics and . . . the declaration that he is prepared to use military force to protect American interests in the Gulf region. (January 26, 1980, p. 13)

But the improvement was not long sustained. Within a month, the glow of strength began to fade and doubts, once again, were raised about Carter's judgment. In the lead article of a February 1980 "American Survey" section, *The Economist* wrote:

The first problem was that some of the moves against the Soviet Union resembled nothing so much as a game that might be called "Add a Sanction". . . . The lack of planning and modulation was almost immediately clear but, as long as everyone was having a good time, that hardly seemed to matter; the question of effectiveness could be dealt with later.

A second problem was more serious: the emergence of articulate and widespread concern . . . as to whether Mr Carter had acted wisely and cautiously. . . . Mr George Kennan, the former ambassador to Moscow . . . spoke for others than himself when he asked, "was this really mature statesmanship?" . . .

Had Mr Carter flexed muscles that were simply not very impressive to those they were intended to frighten? (February 23, 1980, p. 45)

Similar reservations were reported by *The Economist* from Europe:

The Carter administration believes that it is pursuing the course of action best calculated to bring home to the Russians that their action in Afghanistan is extremely ill-

³⁸*The Economist*, December 30, 1978, p. 7.

advised. . . . President Carter is . . . coupling [the demand that the Soviets withdraw from Afghanistan] with a threat to keep his punitive measures in effect indefinitely if the Soviet government fails to comply. What worries the Germans about this American attitude is that they feel Mr Carter has shot off nearly all his arrows at once. If the Russians are obdurate (as most people expect), what is there left in the American quiver? . . .

In short, Mr Schmidt worries, and rather openly, about whether President Carter knows what he is doing . . . (March 1, 1980, p. 26)

While *The Economist* did not hold Carter solely responsible for America's current lack of clout, it did attribute some of the condition to him:

Mr Carter came to office at a time of relative decline in American power. Some of the causes of this--Russian military expansion, a new assertiveness in the third world, the growing independence and economic power of some of America's allies, spiralling oil costs and, at home, mistrust of the foreign-policy apparatus and fragmentation of authority in congress--preceded, and may outlast, his administration. Other problems are more of his own making: his slowness to understand Soviet expansionism until its climax in Afghanistan; diplomatic fumbling (typified by his declaration last year that Soviet troops in Cuba were "unacceptable", after which he accepted them); habitual in-fighting between his advisers in the national security council and the state department, leading to the resignation of Cyrus Vance as secretary of state; and lack of clarity and consistency in Mr Carter's own view of the world. (November 1, 1980, p. 28)

In sum, the "vacillating and vague"³⁹ Mr. Carter, his "feebleness,"⁴⁰ "inaction and irresolution,"⁴¹ his "floundering,"⁴² "politically weak,"⁴³ administration, did not enhance the image of the

³⁹*The Economist*, July 26, 1980, p. 11.

⁴⁰*The Economist*, September 29, 1979, p. 34.

⁴¹*The Economist*, February 24, 1979, p. 36.

⁴²*The Economist*, October 6, 1979, p. 14.

⁴³*The Economist*, September 15, 1979, p. 38.

United States. As *The Economist* pointed out, these characteristics of its leader served to weaken the United States in the eyes of the world:

Eleven weeks after the Russian invasion of Afghanistan . . . Mr Carter has discovered how much weaker to draw lines America's hand has become since the first great confrontation with Russia, over Cuba in 1962; how much slower to trust American leadership many other countries have become; how much his own previous idiosyncrasy in foreign policy has weakened American authority. (March 15, 1980, p. 11)

A credulous president leading a nation of stay-at-homes never looked like a match for a determined Soviet Union. (January 26, 1980, p. 14)

Reagan's image when he emerged as a serious contender for the presidency was, by contrast with Carter's, one of firmness and strength. It was not that *The Economist* accepted Reagan wholeheartedly. Indeed, in an editorial before the Republican Convention, *The Economist* reflected on the fact that the "prospect [of Reagan's candidacy] has made strong men, in America and Europe, blench" because "he has no experience in Washington or foreign affairs . . . and . . . displays an alarming tendency not just to make verbal mistakes but to base much of what he says upon apparently simpleminded analyses."⁴⁴ They themselves, soon after, expressed the view that:

Mr Reagan is inclined to see the heavy hand of Moscow at work in every corner of the globe and, verbally at least, to shoot from the hip. (July 26, 1980, p. 12)

Such trepidations notwithstanding, Reagan imbued with new strength the wobbly image of the United States that the Carter Administration had bequeathed. *The Economist* referred to "Mr Reagan's newly pugnacious America,"⁴⁵ "the new armour-plated America,"⁴⁶ and "a general American

⁴⁴*The Economist*, July 12, 1980, p. 11.

⁴⁵*The Economist*, February 28, 1981, p. 13.

⁴⁶*The Economist*, July 4, 1981, p. 17.

conviction that Russia has to be stopped."⁴⁷ This change was seen to affect the way other countries regarded the United States:

America's friends are reassured that it is in earnest in its determination to build its defences. . . .

With a strong domestic economy and a strong commitment to defence, the United States can once again command the confidence of the free world and the respect of the rest. (July 4, 1981, pp. 16-17)

Reagan's election was seen by *The Economist* as particularly salutary vis-à-vis the Soviet Union:

Half pessimists say that Russia was ready to mount a Saudi coup if a weak Mr Carter returned, but could pause a bit now because of Mr Reagan's great temporary asset in being regarded as a possibly bomb-throwing right-wing nut. (December 27, 1980, p. 15)

Like a cold dawn, the realisation of what a Reagan administration means for Russia is slowly breaking over Moscow. It is not just the new Reagan rhetoric that bothers Mr Brezhnev. . . . Mr Reagan is different [from preceding U.S. presidents]. Behind his anti-communist rhetoric there stands anti-communist conviction. Mr Reagan is prepared to question the whole concept of detente . . .

Unless they are to risk serious damage to the Soviet Union's interests, they cannot turn their backs on this newly assertive America. (August 8, 1981, p. 14)

A more subtle indication of the difference Reagan made to the U.S. image can be found in *The Economist's* forecasts about the strategic situation. During Carter's presidency, when *The Economist* issued its warnings about the forthcoming vulnerability of U.S. missiles in their fixed silos, these were stated in unequivocal terms: the missiles *would* be at risk:

There is *no question* that by the early 1980s the Soviet Union *will have* the ability to destroy all the American land-based missiles with a single strike. (April 14, 1979, p. 36)
[italics added]

⁴⁷*The Economist*, March 28, 1981, p. 11.

After Reagan's election, although the warnings continued, they were frequently phrased only in terms of *probability* or *possibility*:

[Russia's] longer-range missiles will before long give them the . . . power [to destroy], *at least in theory* . . . the land-based missiles in the United States. (March 28, 1981, p. 11) [italics added]

. . . they [the Russians] will soon have a lead in long-range nuclear arms, in the sense that by 1982 or 1983 they will have at least a *theoretical* ability to destroy virtually all of America's land-based missiles, when the Americans can destroy only about a third of theirs. (July 25, 1981, p. 11) [italics added]

By this picturesque phrase ["window of vulnerability"] defence planners mean the years--roughly, 1982-87 or so--in which American land-based long-range missiles *could theoretically* become vulnerable to a surprise attack by newer, more accurate Russian missiles. (October 10, 1981, p. 37) [italics added]

It was as though Reagan, by his mere presence at the helm, had hardened U.S. silos, made them less vulnerable to Soviet attack.

(2) *National Will*. A soft spot in the U.S. image that disturbed *The Economist* during the Carter years was an apparent lack of will. In an editorial, "Seven Lean Years," at the very beginning of 1979, *The Economist* looked ahead at the problems facing the West and questioned whether the United States and its allies could match the political-military will of the Russians:

There is also the matter of what can only be called political-military will. The Russians have, among their allies, a Cuba willing to keep 40,000 or more troops in Africa and south-west Asia, a Vietnam content to have put its army across the Cambodian border, an East Germany lavish with "advisers" in foreign parts; and, in Russia itself, a public opinion that is no obstacle to the generous distribution of Soviet military aid between Kabul and Launda. The lone example of Mr Giscard d'Estaing's France apart, can the Americans find among their allies--or in themselves--even a fraction of the counter-vailling political-military will that may be needed in the next seven years? (December 30, 1978, p. 9)

The Economist noted America's reluctance to use the power it still had in connection both with the Iranian hostage crisis and Afghanistan. In reporting foreign policy speeches given by Secretary of State Vance and national security adviser Brzezinski, *The Economist* explained that "They were answering a tide of criticism, which reached flood with Iran, about the administration's supposed lack of resolution and its unreadiness to use the powers America has and where they count, at the margin."⁴⁸ After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, *The Economist* wrote:

Who invited 40,000 Russian soldiers complete with their Quisling into Afghanistan? Answer: President Carter, the American congress and American opinion--and those American allies who have dared not believe, and have done little to remedy or reverse, the crumbling of America's willingness to exercise its power.

. . . Russia knew the world would not go to war over Afghanistan; that, such is America's weakness of will and of strategic direction these days, it would get away with its act of contempt. (January 5, 1980, p. 7)

The editorial concluded with a reference to "the powerlessness of the country with the best-equipped armed forces in the world . . ."⁴⁹

An attempt to overcome this impression of impotence was apparently made by Secretary of State Vance in the 1979 speech referred to above when he said: "The realisation that we are not omnipotent should not make us fear that we have lost our power or will to use it."⁵⁰ But statements were apparently not enough to still *The Economist's* doubts about whether the United States (and indeed the West) had the will to stand up to the Soviet Union.

This aspect of the American image improved when Reagan moved into the White House. Even before the inauguration, it was reported that Senator Percy on a trip to Moscow "gave warning . . . that the United States has 'the military capacity and the will' to use force if necessary to protect oil supplies from the Gulf."⁵¹

⁴⁸*The Economist*, May 12, 1979, p. 48.

⁴⁹*The Economist*, January 5, 1980, p. 8.

⁵⁰*The Economist*, May 12, 1979, p. 48.

⁵¹*The Economist*, December 6, 1980, p. 24.

(3) *Reliability as an Ally.* Whether or not, in a crisis, the United States could be counted on to honor its commitment to western Europe was an important component of its image. *The Economist* expressed its own concern on this point:

Ever since the Russians built missiles that could hit America, the Americans have been liable to hesitate before risking the incineration of their cities for Europe's sake. (August 8, 1981, p. 10)

And reported that of other Europeans:

The Europeans' fear is that, if war breaks out in central Europe, the United States will panic and decide not to risk a nuclear exchange with Russia for the sake of its allies. (July 25, 1981, p. 53)

U.S. behavior during this period did not help to assuage doubts about its dependability as an ally. The episode of the Soviet brigade in Cuba was a case in point. Even as it reported an attempt by the United States to allay the misgivings of its friends, *The Economist* wrote:

The Cuban affair touched broader doubts about American defence of its interests in the world. The administration is sensitive to the charges that it fails to help its friends. Partly in answer to them, it has just announced that it will sell counter-insurgency weapons to Morocco despite strong objections from the state department. (October 27, 1979, p. 34)

The Economist repeatedly offered suggestions about ways in which the link between the United States and Europe could be made "unbreakable."⁵² The need for reassurance was obvious.

(4) *U.S. Democracy in Action.* The openness of American society and the very nature of the democratic process in action can at times work, both directly and indirectly, to the detriment of the U.S. image.

The Economist itself is tolerant of the problems intrinsic to an

⁵²See Appendix D.

open society, as witness the following statement that appeared shortly after the Reagan administration was installed:

In a country where top politicians and civil servants spend a large part of the first few months of a new administration giving impromptu answers to questions from puzzled congressional committees, marauding reporters and peremptory breakfast-time television interviewers, the nuances of opinion and slips of the tongue that in other nations are discreetly kept behind locked doors emerge into the full glare of the American day. . . . only those who do not know America will find these peripheral gaffes good for a giggle. You do not open a government to the vacuum-cleaner of public inspection without some fluffs getting picked up. (March 28, 1981, pp. 11-12)

At the same time, an occasional remark suggests it feels a certain discretion is lacking in the way the United States conducts its affairs, as for example, when it wrote:

. . . as the Russians will have been fascinated to read in America's obliging newspapers, the tanks deployable by President Carter's vaunted "rapid deployment force" numbered 475 at last overpublic count, compared with more than 3,000 tanks deployable in the area even by bogged-down Iraq. (December 27, 1980, p. 13)

In any event, *The Economist* is entitled to report what it hears and what it observes. And what it hears is sometimes statements that are directly detrimental to the U.S. strategic image. The presidential campaign provided one such occasion. In a foreign policy speech before he was nominated, Reagan stated for all the world to hear that "the Russians are now militarily stronger 'in virtually every category' than the Americans."⁵³ The Senate hearings on the Salt-2 treaty prompted *The Economist* to write:

The senate hearings [on Salt-2] have shown conclusively that American nuclear superiority is disappearing fast . . . (September 8, 1979, p. 16)

⁵³*The Economist*, March 29, 1980, p. 67.

In a less direct fashion, *The Economist's* copious coverage of Senate debates and congressional hearings (to say nothing of stories on other subjects) may also have a detrimental effect on the U.S. image by providing readers with a constant stream of stories about disagreement and dissension at the highest levels of American government. During the Salt-2 debate in the Senate, much was reported on the disagreement among the senators; to this was added disagreement among the military experts:

The joint chiefs of staff gave testimony [on Salt-2] earlier this month. Their chairman, General David Jones, expressed their opinion that the treaty was modest, but useful. The chiefs had reservations, but under careful questioning they would not be budged into opposition. The American military negotiator, however Lieutenant-General Edward Rowny, who now opposes the treaty, claims that the defence department tried to win from the Russians important concessions that, in the end, it failed to get. (August 4, 1979, p. 21)

Disagreement among the experts also emerged as the dominant note in *The Economist's* reports on the MX and Stealth vs. B-1 bomber decisions:

Before Senator Tower's committee on Monday . . . Mr Weinberger, a Reagan loyalist of many years, dutifully supported his president. Not so General David Jones, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, who aired strong disagreement with the administration. He disapproved of the MX decision . . . (October 10, 1981, p. 38)

Last month Mr Weinberger told congress that the new stealth bomber, designed to escape radar detection by the enemy and being developed faster than expected, might be ready by 1989, just three years after the B-1 would go into service. This week the Pentagon's top scientist said this was not in fact so. (November 14, 1981, p. 24)

Reports of such conflicts between executive and legislative branches of the government, as well as within each of these arms, certainly cannot have contributed to an image of U.S. strength and singleness of purpose.

Another aspect of the democratic process that occasionally appeared to hamper the United States, as compared with the Soviet Union, was the need to take public opinion into account in making decisions, particularly decisions about military matters.

The Economist attributed considerable weight to public opinion in shaping U.S. defense policy when it wrote:

The basic criticism of Salt-2, at a time of emerging Soviet neo-imperialism, is that it is not really an equal treaty, and could therefore create a false sense of security in American public opinion which could affect America's defence policy in the coming years. It is probably going too far to say that the euphoria created by Salt-1 was the main reason why the United States has let itself be dangerously overtaken in nuclear weapons in the past few years; but there is no doubt that Salt-1 contributed to the process. (June 23, 1979, p. 13)

Selection of a basing plan for the MX missile represented another instance where public opinion was seen to play an important role. *The Economist* reported that Secretary of Defense Weinberger had abandoned the Carter administration scheme of shuttling 200 ICBMs among 4,600 shelters in two western states because "local opposition to the proposal is so wide-ranging that nobody believes it will be approved."⁵⁴

c. **Image of the Soviet Union.** Soviet superiority in nuclear and nonnuclear military forces was given extra weight by certain characteristics of Soviet society.

(1) *A Monolith.* The image of the Soviet Union that emerges from the pages of *The Economist* is that of the bear--powerful and threatening. The word "bear" was frequently used as a substitute for the name of the country (e.g., "Bear in a snakepit, Can Russia edge out of Afghanistan?"⁵⁵) and bear was used to symbolize it, as on the cover of the March 15, 1980, issue which showed a cartoon of a fierce, attacking bear being held at bay by Uncle Sam holding a pole at his chest, aided by knee-high, protesting figures of Britain, France, Italy, etc. The lead editorial was titled "He-bear in his pride."⁵⁶ Soviet actions were often described using analogies to bears:

⁵⁴*The Economist*, July 25, 1981, p. 32.

⁵⁵*The Economist*, March 1, 1980, p. 13.

⁵⁶*The Economist*, March 15, 1980, p. 11.

The Russians like nothing better than presenting a stony eye and barrel-like chest to someone who wants to argue with them, and watching the fellow bounce off. (October 6, 1979, p. 14)

. . . the Russians will from time to time growl that their patience is about to be exhausted. (July 25, 1981, p. 12)

There was no room in this image for dissenting voices and opposing factions, and as *The Economist* put it, Russia "is less inhibited than the United States by . . . a questioning public opinion at home."⁵⁷

(2) *National Will*. As *The Economist* sees it, "the Soviet Union is more than just a country, it is a cause."⁵⁸ This "cause" provides it with the will to use the military power it has been accumulating. And, in the eyes of *The Economist*, it is this will that makes the Soviet arsenal so frightening:

Russia has been piling up its . . . military strength for the past 15 years, and is willing to use it. (June 6, 1981, p. 11)

[Those who want to ban the bomb] are frightened because Russia has grown militarily stronger in the past dozen years, and seems to be willing to use its new strength to get its way in the world: the risk of war, it seems, has grown.

If Russia can add a nuclear monopoly in Europe to its existing superiority in non-nuclear weapons--meanwhile holding the Americans at arm's length with its impending superiority in intercontinental missiles--its chances of getting a respectfully subordinate western Europe are excellent. It would probably not have to use its combination of military superiorities. The threat would be enough. And there is nothing in Russia's recent history to suggest that it will not use the threat of force to get its way, if it thinks it will work. (August 8, 1981, pp. 9-10)

Russia will use this power [its military superiority in Europe and in ICBMs]. The Soviet Union has an ideology which tells it that its national interest coincides with its moral duty. . . . If it is allowed to keep its emerging across-the-board superiority, the temptation to exploit it will be irresistible. (November 14, 1981, p. 13)

⁵⁷*The Economist*, November 14, 1981, p. 13.

⁵⁸*The Economist*, May 23, 1981, p. 18.

The Economist concludes that "The only way to remove the temptation is to remove the superiority. That means either western rearmament or, under the challenge of western rearmament, a measure of Russian disarmament."⁵⁹

(3) *Imperial Drive.* *The Economist* refers to the Soviets as in a "period of probing . . . assertiveness,"⁶⁰ as "in the first youth of its imperial enthusiasm."⁶¹ These expansionist tendencies are sometimes attributed to Russia's internal problems:

Russia is liable to become even more pugnacious than it has been these past four years, because it can see no solution to its internal problems--and governments in that corner tend to look for compensation abroad. (December 27, 1980, p. 7)

Although *The Economist* indicated that these internal problems could by the end of the decade put a halt to Soviet expansionism,⁶² the image of a monolithic power with superior military capabilities and the will to use them was indeed formidable.

d. Economic Factors. The state of the economy is seen as a crucial element in the strategic balance. In reviewing the situation that faced Reagan after his election, *The Economist* stated:

The . . . crisis to face Mr Reagan will be America's inability to get its economy going without inflation: and the social crisis in its cities and factories that four more years of failure could easily create. If America's economy fails, then so will the reliance of others on America to uphold freedom or maintain peace. (November 8, 1980, p. 15)

More specifically, economic factors become relevant to the picture of the strategic balance when they serve to brake military spending. During 1979-1981, this constraint was seen to affect both sides.

⁵⁹*The Economist*, November 14, 1981, p. 13.

⁶⁰*The Economist*, January 3, 1981, p. 7.

⁶¹*The Economist*, June 9, 1979, p. 12.

⁶²See above, p. 14.

According to *The Economist*, Reagan's desire to strengthen the United States military would be limited by the condition of the U.S. budget:

. . . the Americans have answered the call to arms much more readily than the Europeans, but Mr Reagan's budget problems will sooner or later put a check on how much he can spend on defence. (July 25, 1981, p. 11)

Similarly, it was maintained, internal economic conditions would put a lid on Soviet military spending:

. . . the advantage Russia has won by a dozen years of rearming while the west has dozed gives it a dangerous opportunity in the early and middle 1980s; but after that Russia's own problems will start to close in on it. Its real economic growth rate, already down from an alleged 6% in the early 1960s to certainly under 4% in the late 1970s, is likely to drop further in the next few years. It will probably have too little oil in the 1980s to supply both its own needs and those of its allies . . . (September 8, 1979, p. 17)

. . . the Soviet economy is in no shape to want to spend more than its present 11-15% of gnp on defence . . . part of the Brezhnev message [to his party congress] was a glum admission of the growing weakness of the Soviet economy . . . There are already limits to Russia's ability to push its military spending even higher. The limits will grow tighter as the 1980s march its economy deeper into the slough of centralised incompetence. (February 28, 1981, pp. 13-14)

Indeed, Soviet interest in arms control was attributed to its need to limit spending on arms:

It is "no accident", as the Russians are fond of saying, that they do not want the competition between capitalism and communism to involve another uncontrolled round of nuclear arms-building. The Soviet economy is in poor shape now; it would fare even worse if it had to pour more of its limited resources into another weapon-technology competition with America. The main thing the Russians probably want of this [1980 American presidential election] is Salt-2. (July 26, 1980, p. 12)

A wholly uncontrolled arms race . . . is even less appealing to Russia than it is to the west, because Russia's economy is weaker. (July 25, 1981, p. 12)

Nobody expects the Soviet Union to knuckle under and meekly accept second place in the superpower stakes. . . . but neither are Russia's leaders likely to pull the starting trigger on a new arms race. That would put an enormous strain on an already stretched Soviet economy. The Soviet Union's gnp is little more than half of America's, but the Russians already spend 11-13% of theirs on defence. By 1986, even with President Reagan's new defence programme, America should still be spending little more than 7%. So Mr Brezhnev needs arms control. (August 8, 1981, p. 14)

To sum up, it is possible to distinguish three different types of statements regarding the U.S.-Soviet military balance in the 1979-1981 issues of *The Economist*: (1) statements about the number of intercontinental nuclear weapons on each side; (2) nonquantitative statements about the relative strategic strength of the two superpowers; and (3) general statements regarding the overall balance of power.

During 1979-1981, all three types of statements conveyed essentially the same message: that the balance was tilting in favor of the Soviet Union. More specifically, *The Economist* was telling its readers that the Soviets had achieved nuclear parity with the United States and were pulling ahead, so that starting in the early 1980s and lasting until the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Soviets would be able to destroy all U.S. missiles in their silos and still have a reserve that would make it impossible for the United States to retaliate.

Fundamental to this image were estimates of the number of long-range nuclear warheads and intercontinental missiles. According to the figures provided by *The Economist* (which accorded well with figures later published by the United States Department of Defense), the United States had more warheads than the Soviets, but the latter were catching up. The Russians, already ahead in the number of intercontinental missiles, were said to be continuing to pull ahead on this score. (The United States was reported to have more long-range bombers than the Soviets, but these were not seen as giving the United States a significant advantage.)

But statements about the strategic balance were only rarely stated in numerical terms. As *The Economist* itself affirmed, numbers alone were not adequate to convey a picture of the strategic balance. Indeed,

analysis of *The Economist's* editorials and articles indicates that a number of factors both military and nonmilitary helped to shape the picture of the balance it conveyed.

Thanks to the influence of the on-going Salt-2 talks and the resulting treaty, in evaluating the strategic forces on each side *The Economist* tended to focus on the number of weapons in the categories specified in the treaty, and on what the line-up of weaponry would be in 1985. In assessing the resulting balance, *The Economist* took into account such qualitative factors as size, accuracy, and speed. Military capabilities other than weaponry--such factors as leadership, communications, command and control--received far less attention than weaponry. Little space was given to AMB or civil defense.

According to *The Economist*, conventional forces were an integral and critical element in assessing the relative military strength of the United States and the Soviet Union. This view was based on the assumption that, having achieved nuclear parity, the Soviets would use their nonnuclear power to serve aggressive ends. The inferiority of U.S. and Western conventional forces as compared with those of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact countries was considered a serious deficit in the military balance. Finally, the amount of money allocated to the military weighed in as a significant factor. To *The Economist*, expenditures of this nature can be read as signals of intentions. On the basis of past expenditures, present budgets and indications about the future, Soviet intentions were interpreted to be offensive in nature.

The Economist appeared to experience some confusion about U.S. doctrine. There was uncertainty as to whether or not "launch-on-warning" and "launch-under-attack" were U.S. policy.

The nonmilitary factors that seemed to play a part in *The Economist's* perception of the strategic balance were certain characteristics of the two superpowers. In the case of the United States, U.S. behavior vis-à-vis the Russians; Carter's image of weakness and Reagan's image of firm determination; impressions of a flaccid national will; questions about the reliability of the United States as an ally; and the nature of the democratic process which publicly airs disagreements and self-criticism and must take public opinion into

account in making fundamental military decisions, all seemed to play a part in *The Economist's* assessment of U.S. strength. Three aspects of the Soviet Union appeared to contribute to an image of strength: the monolithic nature of Soviet society, a strong national will, and aggressive behavior. In addition, in the case of both superpowers, the economy was considered a significant determinant in the sense that budget considerations could put a brake on military spending.

PART II: CHARACTERISTICS OF *THE ECONOMIST*'S REPORTING ON THE NUCLEAR BALANCE: SOME COMPARISONS 1948-1973, 1979-1981

INTRODUCTION

The earlier study of *The Economist*'s perception of the U.S.-Soviet strategic balance described the image of the balance conveyed during the years 1948-1973, and identified certain characteristics of the way in which *The Economist* reported on the balance. The present study was undertaken to ascertain what changes, if any, had occurred since 1973 in either *The Economist*'s image of the strategic balance or its treatment of the subject.

In order to fulfill the purpose of the study, Part II of this Note will first compare the substance of the material on the strategic balance for the two periods 1948-1973 and 1979-1981. It will then discuss the ways in which what *The Economist* wrote about the strategic balance during 1979-1981 continued or departed from the characteristics of reporting identified in the earlier study. To facilitate comparison, an extract summarizing the points made in the earlier study is presented at the beginning of each section.

A. THE NUCLEAR BALANCE AS SEEN BY *THE ECONOMIST*

1948-1973: The nuclear weapons and bomber charts¹ [show] the United States starting with a large lead, this lead being gradually whittled down to a point where it begins to approach equality but is still in the U.S. favor, followed by an increase again in the U.S. lead. . . . [In] the missile balance . . . the Soviets start off with a distinct advantage which . . . persists . . . to 1962 when for the first time the United States had an advantage in missiles . . . increases in that advantage were indicated . . . through 1967 . . . the missile advantage passed over to the Soviet Union in 1971 and increased somewhat through 1973.

. . . in the early years . . . based on Sputnik, *The Economist* was quite prepared to believe all Soviet announcements about ICBMs. . . . As the United States

¹See Figures, Appendix B.

made more information available, *The Economist's* current reports tended to accord more with post facto estimates that became available in later years . . . On strategic bombers, *The Economist* . . . was quite correct in the early years . . . It began to go wrong a little earlier than it did on the missile gap . . . [Its 1970] estimate accorded very well with the estimates currently published for that year.²

The 1948-1973 study pointed out³ that *The Economist* did not usually discuss the strategic balance in quantitative terms--i.e., present figures that could be put together to form a ratio. Its statements about the balance of intercontinental nuclear forces were not by and large confined to a narrow definition of the balance as measured by the number of nuclear weapons and strategic missiles and bombers. This was true as well for the 1979-1981 period.

There were nonetheless in both periods a sufficient number of quantitative statements to permit some comparison of this aspect of the image. The figures for 1948-1973 were presented on charts and these charts have been updated with figures from the 1979-1981 issues of *The Economist*.⁴

The charts show that the 3:1 advantage *The Economist* reported for the United States in nuclear bombs and warheads in 1973 had declined to less than 2:1 by 1979, and continued to decline through 1981. A similar pattern of deterioration in the U.S. position was shown for strategic bombers: what in 1970 had been a ratio of more than 3:1 was in 1981 less than 2:1. The United States had been outstripped by the Soviet Union on missiles in 1973, and the ratio of almost 1.5:1 in the Soviets' favor was shown to have remained stable in the intervening years and continued so for the 1979-1981 period.

As noted in Part I, during 1979-1981 *The Economist's* qualitative statements about the balance, which took into account size, accuracy, and speed of weapons as well as other military and nonmilitary factors,

²Herbert Goldhamer, "The Economist's Perception . . . ," pp. 17-19.

³Ibid., pp. 7-9.

⁴See Figures, Appendix B.

conveyed the message that the U.S. strategic force, outdistanced by the Soviets', would be vulnerable to a Russian first strike during the 1980s. Moreover, it was predicted that, given the current status, rates of production, and budget allocations, the United States would not be in a position to retaliate against such an attack until the late 1980s or early 1990s when it would be ready to deploy its new, improved weapons. This image of American vulnerability was explicitly contrasted to U.S. strategic superiority during the 1950s and 1960s.

Post facto analysis for the 1948-1973 period showed that *The Economist*, taken in by Soviet pronouncements, had in the early years tended to exaggerate Soviet strength in some of its estimates, but that as more information was made available by the United States, estimates tended to conform more closely to reality. The figures that appeared in *The Economist* for 1979-1981 were very close to U.S. estimates for those years.⁵

It should be noted, however, that there were no major leaps in weaponry made by either side during 1979-1981. It is not possible, therefore, to state with certainty that *The Economist* has overcome its credulity and will never again grossly over- or underestimate the number of weapons on a given side. However, a greater sophistication regarding weapon development⁶ together with the availability of estimates from U.S. government sources would probably militate against such misjudgments occurring again.

B. CHARACTERISTICS OF *THE ECONOMIST*'S REPORTING ON THE BALANCE

As already noted, *The Economist* tended to discuss the strategic balance in qualitative rather than quantitative terms. It did not necessarily adhere to what the military specialist might define, strictly speaking, as "strategic" in arriving at its assessments. Furthermore, in both the earlier period and in the more recent one, judgments were shown to be subject to the influence of factors in the current military-political-cultural environment. Within this general framework, the author of the earlier study went on to highlight certain

⁵See Table I.1, p. 9.

⁶See below, pp. 59ff.

aspects of *The Economist*'s manner of reporting on the balance. The extent to which *The Economist* continued during 1979-1981 to exhibit these tendencies will be discussed in the pages that follow.

1. Cycles in Weapons Systems and Perceptions of the Balance

1948-1973: Various dimensions of the strategic balance tend to come into prominence and then recede to give place to some other dimension. Thus . . . in 1953 when the Russians exploded their H-bomb, *The Economist* began to pay much more attention to nuclear weapons, and this overshadowed its discussions of delivery capabilities.⁷

It is of some interest to ask whether the military dimensions *The Economist* takes into account in arriving at its assessment of the U.S.-Soviet balance are always the same or whether these change from time to time. The earlier study indicated that shifts occurred in this respect. And the additional data for 1979-1981 further substantiate that observation.

The three years covered by the present study did not show any significant shift as regards the dimensions emphasized. Indeed, barring a fundamental advance in weaponry, such a change could not reasonably be expected within so short a span.

There were, however, notable differences between the two time periods studied. As can be seen in the Tabular Summary,⁸ the greatest emphasis during 1979-1981 was given to intercontinental ballistic missiles, a reflection, no doubt, of the Salt-2 talks. Statements about the current U.S.-Soviet missile balance and predictions that the Soviets would soon be in a position to deliver a catastrophic blow to the U.S. missiles in their fixed silos dominated. Long-range bombers, submarines, and submarine-launched missiles received somewhat less attention. Concern about the general power balance, and particularly the importance of conventional forces in this respect, emerged as a dominant theme.

⁷Herbert Goldhamer, "The Economist's Perception . . .," p. 23.

⁸Appendix A. Cf. the Tabular Summary for 1948-1973, *Ibid.*, pp. 33-47.

In contrast to the earlier period, relatively little attention was paid to defense: neither ABM defenses nor civil defense were discussed with any frequency.

2. Weapon Development and the Strategic Balance

1948-1973: In *The Economist's* reports of military affairs and the strategic balance, discussions of developing weapon systems play a large part. Although such discussions do not bear on the strategic strength of the two powers at a given moment, but only on future acquisitions, they seem to have a pronounced effect on the perception . . . of the *current* strategic balance . . . thereby predating, so to speak, the shift in strategic balance foreseen for the future.⁹

A military or political analyst might be able readily to distinguish between new weapon developments and weapons or delivery vehicles that can be put into action immediately in the event of a conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. On several occasions during the 1948-1973 period, *The Economist* did not make this distinction. Rather, it reacted to news of a new weapon development with an immediate reevaluation of the strategic balance. This occurred, for example, when the Soviets launched Sputnik, after the Russians exploded their first A-bomb, and again when they tested an H-bomb. In each case, although large-scale production and deployment were years in the future, *The Economist* wrote as though the strategic balance had already shifted. The shift foreseen for the future was incorporated into the perception of the current situation.

During 1979-1981, discussion of developing weapon systems continued to play a large part in *The Economist's* reports on military affairs. Various proposed basing schemes for the MX missile, choice of a new manned bomber for the U.S. strategic force, as well as problems in the development of the cruise missile received a good deal of attention.¹⁰

⁹Herbert Goldhamer, "*The Economist's* Perception . . . ," pp. 13, 15.

¹⁰See Tabular Summary, "Delivery: Missiles, Subs and Bombers," Appendix A.

Whether or not it can be said that new weapon developments led *The Economist* of 1979-1981 to "predate the shift" in the strategic balance is problematic. None of the weapons under discussion at that time represented a breakthrough comparable to the Soviets' explosion of their first A-bomb in 1950 or the U.S. announcement of the A-11 in 1964. The lack of a comparable situation makes a definitive judgment on this point impossible.

The evidence would seem to indicate, however, that *The Economist* would not err in this direction if a breakthrough were to come along. There seems to be greater sophistication at *The Economist* now about the long period that must elapse between design and deployment of weapons. The United States was seen to be slower than the Russians in this respect, but years were considered required in both cases:

At present it takes 10 years for the United States to produce a new weapon from scratch; the Russians can do it in about half the time. The difference is in decision and approval time; the actual hardware development the United States can usually do faster. (December 20, 1980, p. 24)

As modern weapons can now take a decade or more in the making, there is no such thing as a "quick fix". (March 14, 1981, p. 24)

The way in which *The Economist* treated news of the development of the Stealth bomber demonstrated this more restrained attitude. The story appeared in the back of the book, in the "Science and Technology" section, and was a sober discussion of the bomber's current status, the design and engineering problems it presented, what its advantages and drawbacks would be, and concluded that whatever advantage it might give the United States would no doubt be short-lived:

. . . the relatively slow speed and likely lack of manoeuvrability of Stealth might be a price worth paying for radar invisibility. Until, of course, the Russians learn to detect it by some other means altogether. (October 4, 1980, p. 93)

In this instance, rather than predating the shift, *The Economist* seemed to have canceled it in advance.

Awareness of the lag between design and deployment was certainly manifested with regard to the MX missile. *The Economist* was only too well aware that the MX would not be ready for deployment until the end of the 1980s. Indeed, it seemed to grow impatient as it saw debate and indecision about basing schemes drag on, perhaps because it feared deployment would be delayed even beyond 1987. In May of 1980, when still another proposal was made, *The Economist* wrote:

Since the latest project looks more sensible than any of its predecessors, and since the MX missile represents the last chance of keeping the land-based part of America's nuclear armory safe against a Soviet surprise attack, the time seems to have come to stop arguing about the best way of deploying the MX, and actually start making the thing and putting it in the ground. (May 10, 1980, p. 12)

Similarly, deployment date weighed in with cost and capabilities in *The Economist's* discussion of the long-range bomber choice:

If the American air force is to have another manned bomber, the choice lies between the B-1 and the almost undetectable "Stealth" bomber, which is in the early stages of development; or both. The slightly watered-down version of the original B-1 that Mr Weinberger is considering will cost around \$20 billion . . . for 100 aircraft . . . Spending that much money would hurt some other defence plans. One of the first to feel the pinch would be the Stealth project itself, which will probably cost something like \$30 billion for 120 aircraft, but which would open up a new era of aerial warfare by creating a bomber virtually invisible to the enemy's radar and infra-red detection devices.

This disadvantage of the B-1 is reinforced by the question of dates. The B-1 would probably not be operational until 1986 . . . The Stealth is said to be scheduled for service around 1989. Stealth advocates say that \$20 billion is too much to pay just to fill a three-year gap during which time the present B-52 bomber fleet will still be useable. The B-1's supporters retort that Stealth may not be ready before 1990 or so, and that the technological tricks which make it invisible also limit its performance so much that it cannot carry enough conventional bombs to fight a conventional war. (July 18, 1981, p. 34)

During the 1979-1981 period, one development occurred that might in earlier days have been viewed as creating a shift in the strategic balance and which, in 1981, was passed over almost without comment. In the April 4th issue, just before the U.S. shuttle was launched, *The Economist* carried a long article evaluating U.S. and Soviet civilian and military accomplishments in space. The article appeared in the "Science and Technology" section. It contained a parenthetical reference to Soviet testing of a "killer satellite:"

America's military men are greatly concerned about Russia's apparent lead in the military use of space (eg, its recent launch of a killer satellite). (April 4, 1981, p. 87)

The same article later included "an anti-satellite (or killer) satellite" in a list of Soviet "firsts" in space and explained that "the Russians . . . tested a killer satellite--using (the Pentagon believes) for the first time a radar-homing device. The satellite was apparently successful in approaching and tracking its target."¹¹ Two weeks later, in an editorial on the implications of the successful U.S. shuttle flight, an alert reader would have picked up the information that the United States was also testing such a satellite. *The Economist* expressed the hope that the shuttle would help maintain peace, and in this connection added:

Even killer satellites, being tested by both Russians and Americans, are for shooting down other satellites, not for destroying cities. (April 18, 1981, p. 12)

There was no further reference to "killer satellites" during 1981.

Several aspects of this treatment of "killer satellites" seem worthy of comment. In the first place it is curious that, although "killer satellites" were first mentioned in a military context as a way in which the Soviets were ahead of the Americans, there was no follow-up discussion of the implications of this development, how it might be used as a weapon, what it implied for the strategic balance. Two weeks,

¹¹*The Economist*, April 4, 1981, pp. 87, 88.

later, the implied gap was closed: the United States, it appeared, was also testing "killer satellites." Yet this was mentioned in another context, almost in passing, certainly not as a significant new military development that balanced the Soviet advantage. The whole subject then disappeared. It would almost seem as though *The Economist* for some reason had second thoughts about the information in its April 4th issue and that, rather than issuing a correction which would only have called attention to the subject, chose to behave as though the statements had never been made.¹² It is also possible that the treatment of the subject demonstrates greater awareness and deliberate avoidance of their own earlier tendency to "predate the shift."¹³

While perhaps less given to predating the shift created by new weapon development, *The Economist* did continue the tendency to "view the present through the lens of the future."¹⁴ Perhaps reenforced by the Salt-2 talks, *The Economist* was inclined to view the strategic balance from the point of view of how it would stand in 1985. Over and over again, *The Economist* stated the need for the United States to take immediate action to protect its ICBMs against the moment in the 1980s when the Soviets would be able to obliterate them and still have enough missiles in reserve for a second-strike threat. The balance was, in this sense, perceived as already having tilted in the Soviets' favor. As indicated earlier,¹⁵ Reagan's election and the U.S. determination to rearm, seemed to lessen somewhat the degree of the tilt.

3. Rates of Change May Dominate Assessment of the Current Balance

1948-1973: We have already noted *The Economist*'s tendency to treat a single event as if it already meant the immediate realization of a state which in fact it only portends. Similarly, *The Economist*'s concern with rates of change often tended to overshadow its account of the current status of the strategic balance. . . .

¹²See Herbert Goldhamer, "*The Economist*'s Perception . . . ," p. vi, for a discussion of *The Economist*'s treatment of its own errors.

¹³The summary of the earlier report that appeared in the British journal, *Survival* would of course have been available to *The Economist*.

¹⁴Herbert Goldhamer, "*The Economist*'s Perception . . . ," p. 16.

¹⁵See pp. 42-43.

Just as a positive future tends to be seen as a positive present, so a negative future tends to impose a negative present. When *The Economist* said, "In two years the Soviet Union will be able to deliver a devastating attack on U.S. industry" (1953), it was probably affecting perceptions of the current, and not only the future, strategic balance.

The Economist's predictions concerning rates of change were sometimes unduly affected by particular political developments.¹⁶

The pattern described above regarding rates of change appeared to continue into the 1979-1981 period. Extrapolation of the current respective rates of production with what was presumed to be an inevitable outcome, tended to color the view of the present. *The Economist* was led, for example, to dismiss an existing Western advantage in warheads because the Soviets were believed to be producing at a rate that would soon erase the West's lead:

For several years Russia has outreached the United States in most measures of nuclear strength . . . Only in numbers of warheads has the United States remained ahead. But even this last American advantage is rapidly disappearing as the Russians deploy large numbers of independently targetable re-entry vehicles on their big new missiles. (August 8, 1980, p. 36)

. . . only in long-range missile warheads is Nato superior and, even there, not by much and maybe not for much longer. (December 26, 1981, p. 44)

Assumptions about the respective rate at which missiles were being produced in the Soviet Union and the United States also underlay the forecasts of U.S. vulnerability just over the horizon.

As noted for the 1948-1973 period, repeated predictions of a negative future may produce a negative view of the present. The forecast of a Russian attack on U.S. industry, mentioned above in the extract from the earlier report, was paralleled during the 1979-1981 period. During this time, as has been noted, *The Economist* repeatedly predicted that by the early 1980s the Soviets would have enough accurate

¹⁶Herbert Goldhamer, "*The Economist's* Perception . . . ," p. 24.

and reliable weapons to wipe out all U.S. missiles in their silos with a single strike, and still have enough missiles left over for a retaliatory blow.¹⁷ Although it must remain conjecture, it seems highly likely that the impact on readers of this constantly reiterated refrain would have been to convey an image of a United States *currently* at the mercy of a *currently* stronger Soviet Union.

The Economist's predictions about rates of change did not seem to be unduly affected by political developments during 1979-1981. Although the Russian invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 might be said to parallel its invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the event did not provoke sharp revisions in *The Economist's* predictions about the rate of change in weapon production as the earlier instance did. The stiffening of America's resolve to rebuild its military strength after Afghanistan was observed merely to have modified slightly the *tone* of *The Economist's* predictions about U.S. vulnerability.¹⁸

4. Defense Spending as an Indicator of the Strategic Balance

1948-1973: On occasion *The Economist* interpreted reductions in U.S. defense spending as an indication that U.S. intelligence on the strategic balance encouraged these reductions. . . . in many other instances, *The Economist* was fully aware of U.S. domestic political and economic considerations that were primarily responsible for cuts or additions to defense spending.

In 1965 *The Economist* affirmed that a Soviet bid to achieve missile equality with the United States would involve a long and economically disastrous competition which the Soviet Union could hardly sustain. In 1967 when *The Economist* first mentioned the Soviet drive to catch up with the United States in the missile field, it did so, of course, without making any reference to its 1965 statement. On the other hand, *The Economist* sometimes tended to impute considerable economic freedom to the United States, as it seemed to do when it predicted, after the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, that the United States would go all-out to prevent the Soviet Union from catching up with it.¹⁹

¹⁷See Tabular Summary, Appendix A, "Predictions."

¹⁸See pp. 42-43.

¹⁹Herbert Goldhamer, "*The Economist's* Perception . . .," p. 26.

As already indicated (see above, pp. 31-33), *The Economist's* view of defense spending as an indicator of the strategic balance was also apparent during the 1979-1981 period.

The more recent statements regarding limits on defense spending set by economic factors (see above, pp. 50-52) seem to echo those *The Economist* made in 1965.

5. Deterrence and the Military Balance

1948-1973: When the United States demonstrated its ability to intervene in various parts of the world, and the Soviets revealed that they were not capable of similar interventions in the Congo or the Middle East, *The Economist* viewed this constraint as having a significant bearing on the power balance, the ability to win a war, and on the level of deterrence.

Although *The Economist* paid a great deal of attention to delivery vehicles, weapons, and defense capabilities, and ascribed advantages or disadvantages in the strategic balance to one or another power in these areas, every once in a while it introduced a different basis for viewing the general power balance, namely, to what extent was each nation deterred by the other?²⁰

During the 1979-1981 period, *The Economist* of course continued to discuss delivery vehicles and weapons and what these meant for the strategic balance; and it continued to make judgements about the extent to which each nation was deterred by the other. In the years between 1948 and 1973, these apparently appeared to be two different ways of viewing the balance. During 1979-1981, however, concern about deterrence seemed generally to underlie *The Economist's* discussion of the balance in weaponry.²¹

²⁰Ibid., p. 25.

²¹This difference may result from the tendency noted earlier (see pp. 24-30) for *The Economist* to consider conventional and non-intercontinental nuclear forces an intrinsic part of the strategic balance, and generally to apply a broad definition of the "strategic balance" in its assessments. Under these circumstances the distinction between strategic forces strictly speaking and a more general balance may get blurred.

The Economist criticized Salt-2 because it locked in a Soviet advantage in huge 10-warhead long-range nuclear weapons. This advantage, taken together with its approaching superiority in reliable and accurate missiles, superiority in theater nuclear and conventional forces, the will to use this power, and the expansionist tendencies it manifested, in the view of *The Economist*, required a matching will and military strength to be contained:

The Salt-2 treaty that Mr Carter is going to sign with Mr Brezhnev on June 18th ratifies the arrival of Russia at nuclear parity with America (and some say more than parity), and by increasing their military budget by 3-5% a year for the past dozen years, without a western counter-increase until this year, the Russians have turned themselves into a global power in other weapons too. Mr Brezhnev has equipped his country for an imperial role. The problem of the 1980s, starting with Vienna-2, will be to find ways of dissuading Russia from using its new-forged strength for imperial ends. . . .

The problem is the will to power of a Soviet Union in the first youth of its imperial enthusiasm, and now equipped with an armoury of global weapons. In the end it has to be contained, so that matters do not slide to major crisis and war, by an equal and matching western will to resist and an equal and matching western armoury. (June 9, 1979, pp. 11, 12)

As things stood, however, *The Economist* believed that, with the threat of its superior military strength, Russia could deter the United States:

At the moment, in addition to being militarily stronger in Europe (and enormously stronger in the oil-producing Gulf region), the Russians are on the verge of being able to destroy the most important part of the American nuclear force-- the accurate counter-attack missiles sitting in silos in the United States itself--virtually without warning. There is little doubt that Russia's warheads will soon be precise and reliable enough to do just that.

To say that this combination of superiorities is intolerably dangerous is not to say that a Russian president will certainly, or even probably, press the button for that nuclear strike. The mere possibility that he might, when coupled with Russia's local superiority in Europe and south-west Asia, is enough for Russian purposes. It makes America more hesitant to stand up to Russian pressure in those regions. It thus makes the countries of those areas more

reluctant to rely on American promises of support. The result is that in a crisis Russia could probably get its way by browbeating or, at most, by a limited use of non-nuclear force. The danger lies in these psycho-political consequences--what Mr Helmut Schmidt calls the "subliminal effect" of Russian nuclear superiority.

Russia will use this power. The Soviet Union has an ideology which tells it that its national interest coincides with its moral duty. . . . If it is allowed to keep its emerging across-the-board superiority, the temptation to exploit it will be irresistible. The only way to remove the temptation is to remove the superiority. That means either western rearmament or, under the challenge of western rearmament, a measure of Russian disarmament. (November 14, 1981, p. 13)

. . . the danger of the "window of vulnerability" is not that the Russians can be certain of bringing off a successful first strike. It is that the Americans, rightly or wrongly, might think that the Russians could be prepared to risk it. In any great international crisis, that would give the Russians an enormous psychological advantage. They would be readier to use lesser kinds of military force; the Americans would be less ready to reply in kind. Even a theoretical first-strike capability puts a powerful wind in Russia's sails. (October 10, 1981, p. 13)

The period from now until 1989 will have something new: the window of vulnerability. Starting around the middle of next year, Russia will have enough of its accurate new missiles to be able to destroy virtually all the American land-based nuclear missiles in a single horrendous attack, and to do so by using only a fraction of its own striking force. . . .

The possession of this theoretical first-strike capacity gives Russia a psychological head-start in every confrontation of wills with the west. The Russians will raise their fist--the threat to use ordinary, non-nuclear force--more confidently in any such crisis. The west will be more hesitant to raise a counter-fist. And the quicker fist could win the contest of wills. (December 26, 1981, pp. 44-45)

Afghanistan proved that the United States could *not* deter the Soviet Union:

Russia knew the world would not go to war over Afghanistan; that, such is America's weakness of will and of strategic direction these days, it would get away with its act of contempt. . . . Afghanistan . . . was lost by the failing deterrence of America. (January 5, 1980, p. 7)

In fact, Norman Macrae, *The Economist's* deputy editor, reported at the end of 1980 that experts thought the United States would lose a war with Russia:

Most analysts now believe that Russia would win almost any war against America in 1981-85 . . . (December 27, 1980, p. 13)

It was because of the perceived need to restore the U.S. deterrent that considerable editorial space was given over, after Afghanistan, to urging the United States on in its new-found determination to equalize the balance of power by building up its military strength.

According to *The Economist*, the United States would regain its deterrent capability in the late 1980s when it would be ready to deploy its new intercontinental nuclear missiles:

One feature of the window of vulnerability is often overlooked. That is the fact that, although it is opening dangerously now, it will slam hard shut about 1989, when the United States starts deploying its silo-busting MX missile on land and accurate new Trident-2 missiles in its submarines.

Almost overnight, the situation will then be radically changed. All of Russia's land-based missiles--and most of its nuclear armoury consists of land-based missiles--will be vulnerable not only to an American first-strike but also to a retaliatory, after-a-Russian-first-blow, strike by America's invulnerable submarine missiles. (December 26, 1981, p. 45)

This suggests that, for *The Economist*, the balance of intercontinental nuclear forces is decisive in maintaining deterrence, and that it is only when that balance is perceived as being out of kilter (as during 1979-1981) that secondary military capabilities, will, and political factors emerge as important in assessing the balance.

6. Activities in Space

1948-1973: Two points are worth noting concerning *The Economist's* reporting of events in space. First of all, it accorded a great deal of attention to these, quite as much attention as to military developments. . . . it treated the space launches very much as a "race" or competition.

Secondly, *The Economist* had a tendency to view Soviet accomplishments in space more favorably than those of the United States, except where the latter were as obviously successful and sensational as were the Apollo missions and the actual moon landing.²²

With minor qualifications, both these points also apply to *The Economist's* reporting on American and Russian activities in space for 1979-1981.

a. **The Space Race.** During 1979 and 1980, coverage of space was almost entirely devoted to U.S. activity in this area and the "space race" between the United States and the Soviet Union received no mention. The "race" during this period seemed to be between the U.S. shuttle and Ariane. In an article on the European satellite launcher, *The Economist* referred to the shuttle as Ariane's "formidable American rival," and to the European Space Agency as having entered the "space race."²³

While *The Economist* carried no reports on Soviet activities in space *per se* during these two years, there were indications that the Russians were using space as a political tool. In May of 1979, for example, *The Economist* reported that at a meeting in Moscow between Giscard d'Estaing and Brezhnev, "Mr Brezhnev produced . . . a proposal for French participation in the Soviet space programme, which would involve sending a Frenchman into space in a Russian rocket."²⁴ A month later, *The Economist* wrote that a similar offer had been made to India and in addition that the Soviets, not for the first time, had launched an Indian satellite free of charge:

India's space programme received a literal boost from the Soviet Union last week when India's second satellite was launched from a Russian cosmodrome. India's first satellite was launched in similar fashion in 1975, and an agreement has

²²Herbert Goldhamer, "The Economist's Perception . . .," pp. 26-28.

²³*The Economist*, May 10, 1980, p. 82.

²⁴*The Economist*, May 5, 1979, p. 54.

been signed for a third Soviet-assisted launch next year. . . .

Russia waived all charge. . . .

Russia is extremely keen to strengthen its links with India by offering sophisticated technology in strategic fields. (June 16, 1979, pp. 50, 51)

In 1981, about the time the U.S. shuttle was launched, *The Economist* turned its attention once again to the standing of the two superpowers in the "space race." According to *The Economist*, the United States was sorely behind the Russians in military applications and it portrayed the U.S. military as seriously concerned about this lag. Two articles that appeared in April and May conveyed this idea vividly:

America's military men are greatly concerned about Russia's apparent lead in the military use of space . . .

Americans are convinced that the Russians are increasing their lead in the military space race . . .

Senior officers in the American air force space programme gloomily list Russia's "firsts" in space . . . (April 4, 1981, p. 87)

. . . Russian cosmonauts . . . [can] fly manoeuvres in space that are the envy of the Americans. (May 30, 1981, p. 81)

The Soviet "firsts" that evoked the gloom and the envy of American military men were spelled out as follows:

. . . an unmanned satellite; a manned spacecraft; a manned space station; and an anti-satellite (or killer) satellite. While America's Skylab has long since plunged ignominiously back to earth, Russia's effort with its Salyut space station is still going strong.

The Russians now have the only operational, remotely-controlled, ferry and re-supply satellite, to maintain their Salyut space station. (April 4, 1981, pp. 87-88)

With the redesign of the old Soyuz spacecraft two years ago, Russian cosmonauts have enough computer power and solar batteries on board to allow them to fly manoeuvres in space that are the envy of the Americans. Docking with the Salyut-6 space station (in orbit for four years now) has become a routine matter. So has the regular supply of food, air and fuel, ferried up to Salyut-6 from earth by an automatic and unmanned Progress cargo craft. (May 30, 1981, p. 81)

In addition to these achievements, it was indicated that the Soviets were continuing their efforts. There was the reference above to testing of an "anti-satellite (or killer) satellite," and elsewhere, to a shuttle and a larger space station:

The Russians are also believed to be developing a reusable space vehicle of some sort. (April 4, 1981, p. 88)²⁵

Russian space engineers are believed to be working on a new 12-man space station. (May 30, 1981, p. 81)

U.S. military efforts in space were described as having been "concentrated on the spy-in-the-sky, weather and navigational (Navstar) satellites . . . [which enable] nuclear submarines or bomber aircraft to pinpoint precisely where they are on the face of the globe so that they can deploy their weapons or bombs with greater accuracy . . ." ²⁶ But efforts were being made, it was said, to catch up with the Russians. The shuttle was to be one way:

The shuttle is seen by Washington (and by Moscow) as the Americans' way to catch up. . . . Military uses will account for roughly a third of planned shuttle launches over the first four or five years of its operation. (April 4, 1981, p. 87)

An American space station was also a possibility:

Nasa has many dreams--some realistic, some fantastical--about assembling large structures in space . . . The betting must

²⁵Notice that *The Economist* writes that it "believes" the Russians are developing a shuttle of some sort. Reliable information on Soviet space activities is apparently difficult to come by. *The Economist* indicated this when it wrote of the shuttle: "The fragmentary evidence available to the public suggests that it will be a smaller and simpler device than the American shuttle." (April 4, 1981, p. 88) Presumably in this area, too, *The Economist* must rely heavily on U.S. sources. It cited the Pentagon as its source regarding the testing of a "killer" satellite. (April 4, 1981, p. 88)

²⁶*The Economist*, April 4, 1981, p. 88.

be that there will be an American space station, if for no other reason than that the Russians have one and it might be important to the balance of military space power. (April 4, 1981, p. 89)

And, though *The Economist* did not refer to it in the context of the "space race," it was indicated that the United States, too, was testing a "killer satellite."²⁷

U.S. space accomplishments of a scientific nature seemed to be placed in a separate category. Successes of the space probes Voyager and Pioneer-11 were duly acknowledged but, technological achievement notwithstanding, did not appear to get added into the balance in assessing which superpower was ahead in the "space race." This is in marked contrast to the earlier years when "the space race provided the principal input for *The Economist*'s discussion of the status of each side in the development of ballistic missiles."²⁸

b. Attitudes toward U.S. and Soviet Accomplishments in Space.

The Economist's tendency to view Soviet accomplishments in space more favorably than those of the United States continued in 1979-1981. This attitude was expressed in two ways: (a) *The Economist* tended to rub it in when the United States had problems with a space project; and (b) it attributed better planning to the Soviets.

In 1979, when it was announced that Skylab was due to fall, *The Economist* took advantage of the situation to poke fun at the United States. Skylab didn't just come down, it fell "ignominiously."²⁹

²⁷*The Economist*, April 18, 1981, p. 12. See also pp. 62-63.

²⁸Herbert Goldhamer, "The Economist's Perception . . .," pp. 26-27.

²⁹It would appear that for *The Economist* objects that fall from space all do so "ignominiously," regardless of nationality. When, the following year, Europe's Ariane launcher failed, it was described as ending "in an ignominious nosedive into the sea . . ." (June 28, 1980, p. 100) Perhaps this is no more than vivid journalism, but the use of the word in connection with Skylab, when considered in connection with the innuendos about NASA, does seem significant.

America's 75-tonne Skylab . . . will tumble ignominiously back to earth. (April 28, 1979, p. 113)

As Skylab was tottering towards its ignominious end . . . (July 14, 1979, p. 87)

Accompanying these statements were jocular headlines and subheads:

Junk in space
What goes up . . . (April 28, 1979, p. 113)

Skylab
Coming soon--to a theatre near you? (June 23, 1979, p. 68)

It also appeared that *The Economist* went out of its way to make Skylab's fall a failure for NASA and to make "an embarrassed Nasa" itself appear incompetent:

Along these same lines, it might be noted that America's difficulties with its cruise missile also prompted sardonic comment:

A little computer in the nose of those flying bombs called cruise missiles is supposed to keep them flying exactly on course at 100 feet above the ground . . . But for all the money being put into the programme, it isn't working too well. In tests, some of America's latest missiles have been dropping to earth on farms in California. Others have simply sunk without a trace in the Pacific, much to the interest of Russian "trawlers" monitoring the test. . . .

Almost half the tests to date have failed.

On some tests, the little jet engine that powers the flying bomb failed to start. Splat. On others, the wings that are supposed to open after the missile has been launched from its mother aircraft didn't. Splat. Or the computer on board was not programmed properly. Splat. Or, more worryingly, the guidance system that was supposed to direct the missile low between the hills (since that is the whole purpose of cruise missiles) failed. More splats." (January 19, 1980, pp. 32, 35)

Appearances to the contrary, *The Economist* was not opposed to deployment of the cruise missile.

. . . the RAE [Britain's Royal Aircraft Establishment] was predicting 1979 as the time of Skylab's decay five years ago, when Nasa was confident it would last out till 1983. (April 18, 1979, pp. 113-114)

Nasa cannot say for certain exactly where the debris will fall. . . . It can only cross its fingers--and pay up if, unluckily, there is damage or injury. (April 28, 1979, p. 114)

Nasa shot a Skylab into the air, it'll fall to earth they know not where. With apologies to Longfellow, that in a nutshell is the predicament the National Aeronautics and Space Administration has with the space laboratory it launched in 1973. (June 23, 1979, p. 68)

It is interesting to note that the April article that started by ribbing NASA for not being able to forecast precisely when and where Skylab would come down, ended with a detailed discussion of how imprecise the science or art of predicting the lifetime of objects in space is.

Since the U.S. space shuttle was viewed as the "rival" of Europe's Ariane launcher, it is not surprising that *The Economist* rooted for Ariane's success. It did seem, however, to take excessive delight in emphasizing the delays the shuttle encountered. It was openly pessimistic about the shuttle meeting its schedule:

Prices for using the United States' space shuttle--when it finally gets off the ground . . . (January 19, 1980, p. 72)

. . . if America's shuttle gets lucky and finally lifts off by February next year (its chances are rated no better than 50:50). (May 10, 1980, p. 82)

Originally planned for a year ago, the shuttle's first operational flight has just been postponed yet again. . . . from March, 1981, to September of that year. And even that date looks optimistic. Most observers are betting that the shuttle will not even get off the ground for its first test flight till the summer of 1981. If so, it is unlikely to be launching satellites before Christmas of that year. (June 28, 1980, p. 100)

Furthermore, on an occasion when both Ariane and the shuttle had setbacks, *The Economist* minimized Ariane's problem which, of course, had the effect of making the shuttle's, by implication, appear more fundamental:

These have been dog days for both America's shuttle and Europe's Ariane launcher. The European Space Agency (ESA) still does not know why one of Ariane's engines misfired last month. . . . But none of the possible culprits looks too worrying. . . . By contrast, the Americans' shuttle is falling even farther behind schedule. (June 28, 1980, p. 100)

Delays in the shuttle would, of course, benefit Ariane which would be in a position to attract potential shuttle customers who grew weary of waiting and *The Economist* took due note of this fact:

Ariane is poised to make the most of the combination of rising demand for satellites and the delays plaguing its formidable American rival, the space shuttle. (May 10, 1980, p. 82)

If congress is getting fed up [with delays and consequent cost problems on the shuttle] so, too, are potential shuttle customers. The increasing uncertainty about the shuttle's schedule has already sent some to look south across the Caribbean to the Ariane's launch pad in Kouru, Guyana. (June 28, 1980, p. 103)

Even as actual launch time drew near, *The Economist* continued to emphasize the delays and cost overrun problem and issue pessimistic forecasts:

Roughly \$2 billion over budget and three years late, America's space shuttle is expected finally to get off the ground early next month. If all goes perfectly . . . But already there are hints that the flight may be less than a total success--even assuming it is not further delayed. (March 21, 1981, p. 91)

All this, of course, assumes all will go well next week. It may not. Mostly to save money--but also to save time--sizeable risks and short cuts were taken in the development of the shuttle. . . . And, if the first launch does succeed, doubts will remain for a time about the reliability of the shuttle in the pounding schedule of around 40 launches a year eventually planned for it. (April 4, 1981, p. 87)

When the shuttle finally did get off, it was reported with marked absence of exultation or even relief at its success; congratulations were slow in coming. Columbia's flight was on April 12, 1981. The April 18th issue of *The Economist* carried an editorial on the significance of the flight and stated simply that: "America's John Young and Robert Crippen became the first men to leave this planet in a spacecraft that can be used again and again."³⁰ In the same issue, the "Business This Week" column contained the item: "The shuttle shuttled forth--and back."³¹ It was not until May 16th, a month after the flight, that some praise for the shuttle flight was forthcoming. In that issue, there was an article headlined: "Shuttle - A star is born?" It referred to "the successful first flight," "Columbia's triumphant touchdown," its "nearly flawless" performance at hypersonic speeds."³² The lag between the event and the applause might be attributed to the time required for *The Economist* to gather its material, but an interpretation that comes more readily to mind is a suspicion that *The Economist* was miffed that its predictions of disaster had been wrong.

Coverage of the second shuttle flight was ambivalent. The pessimistic tone was resumed; but it was acknowledged that some things did go right. *The Economist* even refrained from gloating over the fact that the second flight had to be cut short:

³⁰*The Economist*, April 18, 1981, p. 12.

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 61.

³²*The Economist*, May 16, 1981, p. 103.

Having passed all its final tests, America's shuttle Columbia looked set to return to space on October 9th--the first spacecraft ever to make a second trip. But then a mini-disaster occurred. . . .

By this week the worst of the disaster was over. . . .

Even if this second mission goes perfectly, the shuttle will continue to face problems. Getting into full operation will take time. It seems unlikely that, during the first several years of operation, it will be possible to turn the shuttle round between flights in just two weeks. The budget axe of the Reagan administration is causing pain, too.

(October 3, 1981, pp. 31-32)

Prudence dictated that the space shuttle Columbia should cut short its second flight. . . .

. . . however, more went right on the flight than wrong. . . .

The series of things that did go wrong raises questions about Nasa's ability to cope with a reusable craft as complex as the shuttle. . . . On the present showing, there seems little possibility that Nasa will be able to launch a shuttle every two weeks as it has planned, and as the military want. . . .

The latest mission provides no one with reassurance.
(November 21, 1981, p. 36)

The United States space research program as a whole was depicted as hampered by a tight budget. The success of the shuttle notwithstanding, programs were to be cut:

Space scientists were hoping the shuttle's success would make President Reagan relent about cuts in space R and D, but so far there is no sign of that happening. . . .

With shuttle given priority within Nasa's budget, the exploration of space has been clobbered. Three projects have been cancelled and some others delayed. (May 2, 1981, p. 96)

America's space exploration effort is tumbling out of orbit. The Reagan administration caused 9% to be removed from Nasa's \$6.5 billion budget in March, and now another 6% cut is in prospect. (October 17, 1981, p. 17)

And, as *The Economist* saw it, "Until . . . the late 1980s, American military spending on space will be relatively modest."³³

³³*The Economist*, April 4, 1981, p. 88.

By contrast, *The Economist* portrays the Soviets as having sustained a continuous space research effort. It summed up the difference between the two superpowers when it wrote in an article on Russian research achievements:

Space research has soared steadily along in Russia unlike in America where it advances in fits and starts. (May 30, 1981, p. 81)

7. The Sources Acknowledged by *The Economist*

- 1948-1973:
- o *The Economist* relied very largely on American sources for many of its major articles on U.S. military and strategic capabilities. . . . more especially statements made by U.S. presidents, congressional leaders and the Secretary of Defense. Occasionally major attention was given to private publications . . .
 - o Occasionally *The Economist* relied on English sources . . .
 - o . . . *The Economist* presented the conflicting statements of persons holding different points of view. . . .
 - o The political debates that took place on military affairs in the United States provided *The Economist* with a great deal of material to choose from concerning U.S. military capabilities. . . .
 - o Many of the most negative statements concerning U.S. military capabilities published by *The Economist* came from high U.S. sources. . . .
The Economist also reported on U.S. military developments by reviewing books that bore on this subject or by publishing letters from publicists . . . or military specialists.
 - o *The Economist* was sometimes present at U.S. weapons demonstrations . . . ³⁴

³⁴There was no evidence that *Economist* reporters were present at demonstrations of U.S. strategic forces during the 1979-1981 period. The point made in the earlier report about the impact of demonstrations on journalists being greater than publicity releases or statements by high official suggests that demonstrations might perhaps have been helpful in combating some aspects of the negative image *The Economist* conveyed about U.S. strategic capabilities. See Herbert Goldhamer, "*The Economist's* Perception . . . ," pp. 21-22.

- o On the Soviet side, the source of *Economist* information is much less clear. *The Economist* was disposed to accept Soviet statements at face value . . . Later . . . *The Economist* became more wary . . .
- o *The Economist* gave considerable attention in the fifties to information made available at air shows . . . or flybys . . .³⁵
- o In the last years, Soviet-US Salt negotiations provided *The Economist* with much new material of U.S. origin of a more or less official character on the missile and manned bomber balance.³⁶

By and large, the findings for 1948-1973 hold for the more recent period. *The Economist* continued to rely on U.S. sources for information about American military and strategic capabilities. These included the usual array accessible to a journal like *The Economist* and its correspondents in the United States:

- o speeches and statements by the president, presidential candidates, Cabinet officers and high government officials;
- o interviews with experts inside and outside the government;
- o government sources: State department, Defense department, White House, CIA statements, press releases, reports;
- o congressional hearings, debates
- o U.S. media (Television specials, *The New York Times*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *New York Review of Books*; columnists)
- o Reports of special organizations (The Brookings Institution, Council on Foreign Relations)
- o Public opinion polls
- o Books
- o Letters from readers, some of whom, like Fred Iklé, Richard Pipes, and Adam Yarmolinsky, are specialists in strategic affairs

³⁵During 1979-1981, air shows and flybys did not generate any articles relevant to the U.S.-Soviet strategic balance.

³⁶Herbert Goldhamer, "*The Economist's Perception . . .*," pp. 19-22.

Statements and reports from British (The International Institute for Strategic Studies, Royal Aircraft Establishment) and other foreign sources (a West German white paper, NATO reports, an interview with Helmut Schmidt) also continued to be used.

What is notable during this period is that attribution of source was sometimes missing where it might have been expected.³⁷ When figures on the strategic balance were presented, the source was not always cited. At the end of December 1981, for example, a table showing the number of "intercontinental weapons and European-based weapons with ranges greater than 500 kilometres" for NATO, Russia, and China was undocumented.³⁸

As indicated earlier in this Note, political debate on military affairs, as during the 1948-1973 period, provided a good deal of material on the strategic balance and was the occasion for airing conflicting viewpoints within the United States.³⁹ During 1979-1981, the Senate debate on ratification of the Salt-2 treaty, the presidential campaign, the defense budget, proposals and counter-proposals about the basing of the MX missile and the choice of a new long-range bomber, all generated facts and figures for *The Economist's* mill.

Among all the statements made, it was not difficult to find some by high officials and individuals whose opinions carry weight to the effect that the U.S. strategic force was inferior to the Russians'. Ronald Reagan's statement in March of 1980 to the effect that the Russians were

³⁷It appears to be policy at *The Economist* to give the reader a distillation of its investigations rather than providing sources for every point. This is suggested in a long article by deputy editor Norman Macrae on "President Reagan's inheritance." On the fifth page of the article, there is a box headed "Acknowledgements" that states: "I have followed my usual bad habit in pinching without attribution the best ideas and *bons mots* of the friends and distinguished people who gave me interviews. My thanks to Henry Kissinger, Alan Greenspan, Herman Kahn (as ever), John Naisbitt, many people in the American Enterprise Institute, the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, the Brookings Institution, the executive office building of the White House and the three seminars I attended in America in the past three months. . . ." (December 27, 1980, p. 17)

³⁸*The Economist*, December 26, 1981, p. 45.

³⁹See pp. 45-48.

militarily stronger than the United States "in virtually every category" is just such a statement.⁴⁰ Henry Kissinger, interviewed in 1979, gave a pessimistic evaluation of the current status of the balance:

I think it is generally recognised that by some time in the early 1980s the Soviet Union will have the capability to destroy with a reasonable degree of confidence most of our land-based ICBMs. In the same period of time we will not be able to destroy the Soviet ICBM force. This creates a gap in the design of the two forces that is bound to have geopolitical consequences, especially since we are clearly inferior in forces capable of local intervention. (February 3, 1979, p. 18)

Although positive statements about U.S. capability can be found, they seemed to come from paler figures and did not carry great conviction. In May 1979, for example, *The Economist* reported a speech on U.S. foreign policy by Secretary of State Vance in which the secretary

dwelt first on America's intrinsic strengths, its economic power, its allies and its military arsenal, which, he said, no responsible military official he knew of would wish to swap for anyone else's. Power being relative, he proceeded to four changes that are affecting the way in which this strength can be deployed in the world. The first was from a period of American strategic supremacy to an era of "stable strategic equivalence"--shared power with the Soviet Union, in other words. (May 12, 1979, p. 48)

Hardly a rousing statement. Again, while President Carter was in Vienna to sign the Salt-2 agreement, Senator Moynihan tried to still some of the critical comment until Carter's return. *The Economist's* report of his remarks gave the impression of the senator's having had to "reach" for something positive to say about U.S. leadership:

There would be plenty of time for disagreements after Mr Carter's return from Vienna, said Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan on Sunday. While presidents are abroad, Americans ought to support them, he argued. Elaborating on his patriotic, if one-sided courtesy, the New York senator remarked on the superior vigour and confidence of American leadership compared with Russian. (June 23, 1979, p. 60)

⁴⁰*The Economist*, March 29, 1980, p. 67.

And, in 1981, commenting on the CBS five-part television series on U.S. defense, *The Economist* wrote:

In the CBS series, its boss, Mr Caspar Weinberger, appears hesitant and unconvincing. (June 13, 1981, p. 26)

Apart from President Reagan who reiterated his determination to build up American military capability there were not many strong, charismatic voices raised in praise of the current American strategic strength.

The Economist also relied largely on U.S. sources for information about Soviet military forces. As they stated in an article on "Nato and the Warsaw Pact:"

Russia's published spending figures are worthless, a mere statistical figleaf. But several different groups of western analysts have calculated what lies behind the figleaf, the most comprehensive job probably being that done by the CIA. (August 9, 1980, p. 35)

This view of the information made available by the Soviet Union seems to represent a distinct change from the tendency noted in the earlier study to accept Russian statements at face value.

The Economist was probably also impelled to rely on western sources because the Soviets are less than forthcoming about new developments. In an article about space, for example, *The Economist* indicated it had drawn its conclusions about Russian development of a reusable space vehicle on "the fragmentary evidence available to the public. . . ." ⁴¹

As indicated above, the CIA is a prime source for *The Economist*. Pentagon figures are also cited, as is information gleaned from other American research sources. ⁴²

⁴¹*The Economist*, April 4, 1981, p. 88.

⁴²A paper by Anthony Sutton of Stanford University on the origin of technological processes adopted in the Soviet Union was cited, for example, in an article on Russian scientific and technological research. (May 30, 1981, p. 80)

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THE ECONOMIST'S PERCEPTION OF THE US-SOVIET STRATEGIC
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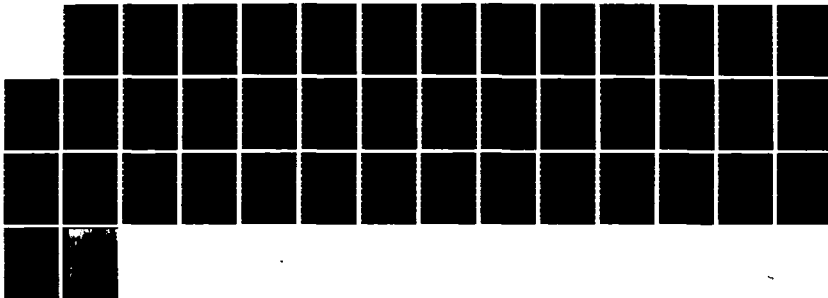
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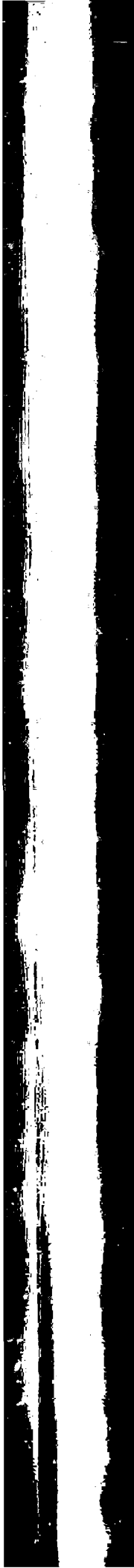
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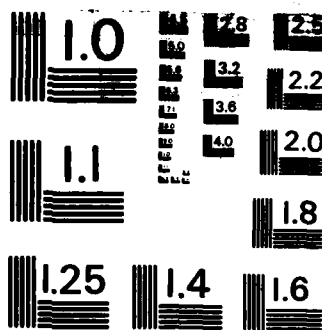
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MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS-1963-A

While not giving much credence to official figures provided by Soviet sources for consumption by the West, *The Economist* apparently considered Soviet material intended for Soviet audiences a reliable source. Thus, in an article about British civil defense, it referred to a detailed do-it-yourself Soviet civil defense manual (translated into English, it duly noted, by the U.S. Air Force).⁴³ And when *Pravda* and Tass criticized President Carter's Directive 59, *The Economist* turned to the Soviet Officers' Handbook and Soviet military journals for some telling comments about Soviet strategy on nuclear war.⁴⁴

From time to time, *The Economist* gave space in its correspondence columns to letters from Moscow's Novosti Press Agency that, like the following one given the lead position in the September 22, 1979 issue, are intended to correct *The Economist's* and its readers' erroneous impressions of Soviet positions:

Your editorial "A call to counter-arms" (September 8th), together with your sensationalist front cover picture, revives the bogey of the "Soviet threat" yet again. I would remind your readers that this new so-called "window of opportunity" in the 1980s, when, it is alleged, our country could launch a nuclear first strike against the United States, is very reminiscent of the "missile gap" which the west discovered in the 1960s. . . . Both the missile gap scare and the present window-of-opportunity scare rely on it being believed that the Soviet Union is waiting to attack the west at the first opportunity.

In the light of such examples, it is surely legitimate to pose the question of who threatens whom. As for Soviet policy, Marshal N. Ogarkov, the Soviet C-in-C, summed it up in a keynote speech last month when he said: "our efforts are directed precisely at averting the first strike and the second strike and, indeed, at averting nuclear war in general."

Our government is still awaiting an answer to its proposals that all the Helsinki signatories should sign a treaty binding them never to be the first to use nuclear weapons. When western circles started to voice fears that this might simply increase the possibility of conventional attack, our country broadened its initiative. It indicated that the no-first-use principle could be extended to embrace conventional forces too. That suggestion also awaits reply.

We do not believe that real security for our peoples can

⁴³*The Economist*, February 23, 1980, pp. 62-63.

⁴⁴*The Economist*, August 16, 1980, pp. 38-39.

be secured by ever-increasing armament. Real security demands negotiation and agreement to limit arms and lead to disarmament. Salt-2 is a step in this direction. (Letter from Sergei Snegov, Novosti Press Agency, Moscow, September 22, 1979, p. 4)

This generous donation of space, on occasion, to Soviet expression (propaganda?) is no doubt regarded as being more than balanced by *The Economist's* own editorials and statements of opposing views from its readers in the west.

CONCLUSIONS

Comparison of the two time periods studied has shown that *The Economist's* 1979-1981 image of the strategic balance differed markedly from that of the earlier period. In contrast to the years between 1948 and 1973 when the U.S. intercontinental force was usually seen as superior overall to that of the Soviet Union, the balance during 1979-1981 was perceived as tilting in the opposite direction. Furthermore, it was predicted that, since U.S. missiles in their fixed silos would be vulnerable to a Soviet first strike, the Russians would hold the upper hand for the remainder of the decade, until the MX and improved Trident missiles were deployed in the late 1980s or early 1990s.

Changes also were noted in the dimensions that *The Economist* focused on in arriving at its assessment. The number and quality of intercontinental missiles and launching vehicles on each side, and the rate at which additional improved weapons were believed to be coming on line were fundamental in both periods. What emerged as a particularly significant factor for the 1979-1981 period was the relative strength and quality of the conventional forces on each side. *The Economist* forecast that unless the United States (and its Western allies) righted the existing imbalance in conventional forces, the Soviet Union, under the umbrella of nuclear parity, would be free to use its conventional forces to aggressive ends. For *The Economist*, the U.S. loss of nuclear superiority brought conventional forces from the background into the forefront of attention. In its view, Afghanistan had shown that under present conditions the United States could not deter Soviet aggression.

While ABMs and civil defense received a fair amount of attention in *The Economist's* discussions of the strategic balance during the earlier period, little mention was made of this aspect of the balance during 1979-1981. During neither period was great stress laid on C³I in the assessment process.

Although it is possible to discern some significant changes since 1973 in the characteristics of *The Economist's* reporting on the strategic balance that were identified in the initial study, much seems to have remained the same in this respect.

There was evidence of change in the way in which *The Economist* treated information about new weapon developments. In contrast to the earlier period when *The Economist* exhibited an inclination to perceive an immediate shift in the strategic balance when a new weapon appeared, even though that weapon could not be expected to be operational for many years, during 1979-1981, *The Economist* appeared well aware of the years that must elapse between design and the deployment of new weapons.

It was noted that during 1948-1973, while *The Economist* generally seemed to judge the strategic balance by examining delivery vehicles, weapons and defense capabilities, from time to time it departed from this and judged the balance from the point of view of the extent to which each nation deterred the other. For the more recent period, a belief that the United States was no longer capable of deterring the Soviet Union seemed to be an assumption underlying *The Economist's* discussions of the balance in weaponry.

For the rest, the characteristics of the 1948-1973 period with only occasional minor qualifications appeared still to apply in 1979-1981. Thus, the point made in the earlier study that various dimensions of the strategic balance tended to come into prominence and then recede, giving place to some new facet was demonstrated again in the 1979-1981 discussions of the strategic balance described just above. Expectations of a negative or positive future based on rates of change continued to color the image of the present status. *The Economist* also continued to interpret defense spending as an indicator of the strategic balance. And it continued to treat developments in space as a "race" between the United States and the Soviet Union--a race in which the Soviets were seen as ahead principally because they had achieved more "firsts" in the military application of space. Such Soviet achievements were attributed to what was regarded as a consistently sustained space research program that contrasted with U.S. stop-and-go efforts in this area.

Finally, as it did earlier, *The Economist* during 1979-1981 relied chiefly on U.S. sources in its discussions of the strategic balance.

Appendix A

PERCEPTION OF THE U.S.-SOVIET STRATEGIC BALANCE BY *THE ECONOMIST* (LONDON), 1979-1981: A TABULAR SUMMARY¹

Notes:

1. The following pages summarize statements about the strategic balance that appeared in *The Economist* during 1979-1981. For the sake of brevity, *The Economist*'s statements have been paraphrased and abbreviations used liberally.
2. When *The Economist* gave the source of its statement, this has been noted in the text or in parentheses at the end of the item.
3. Statements from the same article may appear under more than one column, and a number of different statements from the same article may appear in a given column when they bear on different aspects of the subject.
4. The first 6 columns refer for the most part to the status as of a given year. Predictions made by *The Economist* are summarized in column 7. Predictions, however, may also suggest current or ongoing changes.
5. The last column, Postdictions, summarize *The Economist*'s statements that refer to the balance in *earlier* years.
6. The numbers at the end of each item refer to the date of the issue (e.g., 1/20 = January 20th) of *The Economist* in which the statement appeared.

¹In the initial study, items relating to space were included in the column headed "Delivery." A separate category for items about "Space" has been added for 1979-1981.

Year	Nuclear Weapons	Missiles, Subs, Bombers	Defense	Space	General Power Balance, War Winning Ability, Deterrence	Doctrine	Predictions	Postdictions
	David Linebaugh, Brookings Institution, in a letter, disagrees with a statement of the Economist 12/30/78 re Salt-2. He states Russian superiority in megatonnage is offset by American superiority in accuracy and total number of weapons. 2/3	Russians have 308 huge SS-18s; US has none; Russians are building several land-based missiles bigger than anything Americans possess which can carry a much larger explosive load. 12/30/78	In the 1970s, Congress cut the US program for ABM from 12 sites to two, and then dismantled even those although the freeze agreement with the Soviets permitted two sites for each side. (Kissinger) 2/3	The US spacecraft that sent back pictures of Venus is now sending back pictures of Jupiter and will continue on to Saturn, over 800 miles from earth. 1/20	In an interview, Kissinger refers to "the general perception of an American geopolitical decline." 2/10	Kissinger, in an interview, distinguishes between retaliatory capability and overall total counterforce capability and categories of weapons; e.g., states that a side whose only strategic option is to target civilian population and industrial sites that would produce casualties exceeding 100m cannot be said to have a strategic doctrine; he considers this an abdication of moral and political responsibility. Having only a retaliatory capability would leave the US politically paralyzed. 2/3	Under Salt-2 agreement, by 1985, US will be behind Russia in strategic superiority. In 1962, US had about 2,000 missile sites and bombs; SU had 60-70. In 1973, US had 7,000-8,000 weapons for forces; SU had about 1,600 ICBMs that were not very accurate and not very well protected. (Kissinger) 2/3	During entire postwar period US had strategic superiority. In 1962, US had about 2,000 missile sites and bombs; SU had 60-70. In 1973, US had 7,000-8,000 weapons for forces; SU had about 1,600 ICBMs that were not very accurate and not very well protected. (Kissinger) 2/3
1	Salt-2 will not halt the nuclear arms race with the Soviet Union, but it will make the race less rough and uncontrolled. (Sec'y Defense Brown) 4/14	US defense budget for fiscal year starting Oct. 1979 increases amount for MX intercontinental ballistic missile from \$423m to \$675m. 2/3	American space researchers are about to test an aircraft with one forward while the other sweeps back. Its design may point the way to a practical supersonic transport carrying more than 100 passengers at speeds up to 1,000 mph. 2/17	On June 30th, America's 75-ton Skylab, the largest man-made object in space, will tumble ignominiously back to earth. NASA thinks it could come down even earlier. NASA was confident it would last out till 1983. 4/28	The Economist quotes from an Atlantic Monthly article by James M. Burns who interviewed President Carter and says that whether or not Salt-2 is ratified by the US Senate, Carter will observe its terms: "The US would remain armed, but it would not plunge into an arms escalation of its own. 3/3	By 1985, Russians will have a lead of more than 3 to 1 in total number of megatons that can be dropped on the other side; 7 to 1 in megatons carried in land-based missiles; and therefore a 3:2 lead in ability to destroy protected targets (missile sites) and 2:1 lead in ability to destroy unprotected targets. (cities) 12/30/78	Kennedy out-faced Khrushchev in the Cuba missile crisis because America then had far more nuclear weapons than Russia and nuclear power as well. 6/9	
9	Since 1961, the West has lost its old lead in intercontinental nuclear weapons. 6/9	David Linebaugh, Brookings Institution, in a letter, disagrees with The Economist's assessment 12/30/78. He states Russian strength in land-based missiles is offset by American strength in air and at sea. 2/3	In a speech at Georgia Institute of Tech., President Carter said that under Salt-2, SU would have to dismantle some 250 missiles or bombers, 10 percent of their strategic force; that the treaty would limit the modernization of missiles and the number of warheads missiles could carry; but it would allow US to pursue all the defense programs it may eventually need: the MX missile, the Trident missile, and submarine cruise missiles launched from air, ground, and sea, cruise-missile-carrying aircraft, and a new bomber. 2/24	Secretary of State Vance, in a speech, talked of America's intrinsic strengths, its economic power, its allies and its military arsenal which "no responsible military official he knew of would wish to swap for anyone else's." He said the world was moving from a period of American strategic supremacy to an era of "stable strategic equivalence" with the SU. 5/12	In a letter, reader James Wimberley of Strasburg, agrees with Kissinger; but he thinks his counterforce strategy would induce an arms race or even make preemptive strikes a temptation. 3/4	In the early 1970s and 1960s, the US had superiority in intercontinental strategic weaponry but not in global military capabilities. (Helmut Schmidt) 10/6		

Year	Nuclear Weapons	Delivery: Missiles, Subs, Bombers	Defense	Space	General Power Balance, War Winning Ability, Deterrence	Doctrine	Predictions	Postdictions
	California Governor Jerry Brown proposed to agents of the Univ. of Calif. that work on nuclear weapons be discontinued at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory where all US military research into nuclear warheads and atomic explosives is carried out. The Economist notes that both MIT and Stanford Univ. had cut their ties with similar institutions where military programs were being conducted. 7/21	US needs a mobile missile to counter growing Soviet threat to its land-based missiles but is having difficulty choosing a system: a trench vs MPS vs air mobile. 4/14	India's second satellite was launched last week from a Russian cosmodrome. Russia waived all charges. Mr. Brezhnev suggested to India's prime minister a joint space project to put an Indian cosmonaut into orbit in the 1980s. Russia is extremely keen to strengthen its links with India by offering sophisticated technology in strategic fields. 6/16	NASA cannot predict exactly when or where Skylab will fall; reentry science is not very precise. 6/23	The Economist states that the will to power of a Soviet Union in the first youth of its imperial enthusiasms, and now equipped with an armoury of global weapons . . . has to be contained . . . by an equal and matching western will to resist and an equal and matching western armory." 6/9	In a letter written in response to the Economist editorial "A Call to Counter-arms," a Soviet spokesman from Moscow's Novosti Press Agency quotes Soviet Marshal Ogarkov: "our efforts are directed precisely at averting the first strike and the second strike and, indeed, at averting nuclear war in general." The SU later broadened this no-first-use principle to embrace conventional forces as well. 9/22	By early 1980s, Russia, with growing number of increasingly accurate warheads it can pack into its huge missiles, will be able to destroy virtually all of US land-based missiles in a single blow and still have a lot of missiles ready for a second blow. US could probably knock out only about two-thirds of Russia's land-based missiles in a first strike. 12/30/78	
1								
9								
7								
9								
		Backfire bomber, which is not included in Salt-2 agreement because Soviets say it does not have intercontinental range, can in fact reach the US by refueling in the air. 6/23		Voyager-2 reached Jupiter and sent back to earth an array of startling pictures of the red planet and its moons. 7/14	It is expected that Mr. Kissinger, when he testifies before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, will not oppose the Salt-2 treaty but will instead concentrate on the issue of increasing the country's commitment to new strategic systems to counter Russia's lead. 7/14	A signal that flashed through the communications system of the North American Air Defense Command of an oncoming missile attack on the US proved to be a false alarm. The alert proved that the system works: fighters got off fast and the error was caught fast. But the main lesson is that the system is not foolproof enough for the US to consider the tactic known as "launch on warning." 11/17	The Economist questions whether the US and its allies will have the necessary political-military will that may be needed in the next seven years. 12/30/78	
	Planners of strategic forces are assured of funds for cruise missiles, the MX missile and Trident submarine missile; they have not given up hope of a new manned penetrating bomber in place of the B-1 that Carter turned down. 9/8				Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Salt-2, Kissinger said: "Rarely in history has a nation so passively accepted such a radical change in the military balance." 8/4		David Linebaugh, Brookings Institution, in a letter, says US retaliatory capability will go up during 1980s with deployment of air-launched cruise missile and Trident missile and submarine. Deterrence will remain effective. 2/3	
	Russia has achieved a long-range nuclear striking force on the point of surpassing America's. 9/8				The Senate hearings on Salt-2 have shown conclusively that American nuclear superiority is disappearing fast. 9/8			
					In a letter, reader Robert DuJarric of Cambridge, Mass., says the question-mark over America's ultimate resolve to use its strategic nuclear forces to save Europe may never totally disappear. 9/29			

Year	Nuclear Weapons	Delivery: Missiles, Subs, Bombers	Defense	Space	General Power Balance, War Winning Ability, Deterrence	Doctrine	Predictions	Postdictions
		The Americans no longer have the ability--as they probably had in the 1960s--to wipe out Russia's long-range missiles by striking first. 9/8		Delays and rising costs are threatening to upset America's space programs for the early 1980s. The technical headaches are bad. The budgetary implications are worse. The shuttle, designed as a reusable, manned space-aircraft cum-launch-pad, was originally scheduled to make its first flight in March. It now looks like the shuttle will not become operational before the late summer or autumn of 1981. 9/29	The Economist linked the Senate's acceptance of Carter's proposed increase of 3 percent in the fiscal budget for the new fiscal year and recommended increases of 5 percent for 1981 and 1982 to concern about the military balance among other things. 9/29	After the false alarm in the North American Air Defense Command warning system, The Economist noted that the US would not be able to destroy the SU strategy the SU arguments for ICBM force. Salt-2, Sec'y of Defense Harold Brown had assured the Senate that the Russians can never be sure whether the US will actually launch on warning. 11/17	By the early 1980s the SU will have capability to destroy most US land-based ICBMs; the US would not be able to destroy the SU ICBM force. (Kissinger) 2/3	
1		The MX missile, due to come on stream in the late 1980s, is more accurate, has more warheads per missile and each warhead is more powerful than on today's Minuteman missile. 9/22			In a letter, reader Emil Lengyel of Rutherford, NJ, questions whether the Soviets would have the necessary "moral support" of its population for a war of aggression with 100M disaffected people in its satellite countries, 10M disaffected Ukrainians, Baltic peoples, Georgians, and Moslems within its borders. 10/6			
9		Salt-2 treaty emerged from Senate Foreign Relations Committee with 21 amendments, among which were: that the Russian underground about range, bomb load and production rate of the Backfire bomber be given same status as the treaty; that the protocol limiting the range of the cruise missile and transfer of its technology to the US' European allies be made to expire on December 31/81. 11/17		Scientists are delighted with the results of Pioneer 11's close encounter with Saturn. It has produced a mass of valuable scientific data and will continue to send information back to earth from deep space until the late 1980s. 11/17	Helmut Schmidt, in an interview, says that detente depends upon maintaining military equilibrium and that Salt-2 is designed to maintain that equilibrium in intercontinental strategic weapons. This is not enough to stabilize the strategic situation as a whole which, in his sense of the word, embraces all the military fields as well as the political, psychological and economic. 10/6		By the second half of the 1980s, a high percentage of US strategic weapons will be in cruise missiles, that take 8-12 hours to reach the SU and that are clearly reliable. The SU's ballistic missiles can reach the US in half an hour. The SU will not have to fear a counterforce strike. He does not see an adequate emphasis on counterforce capability for 1980-87. (Kissinger) 2/3	
		The Senate passed a resolution supporting the idea of going ahead with development of the MX. Controversy over the basing plan (track vs MPS) continues. 11/17		MASA wants to build a new super-computer that could largely replace wind tunnels in aircraft design, saving a lot of time and doing a better job. Cost overruns on space shuttle may make getting funds for the new computer difficult. 12/15	Apropos the presence of a Soviet brigade in Cuba, The Economist says that Soviet leaders make their calculations about foreign policy on the basis of what they call the "correlation of forces"--meaning that other people call the balance of power, but measured in political and psychological terms as well as purely military ones. They may now reckon that the correlation of forces between Russia and America has moved far enough in their favor during the 1970s to leave the Americans with little room for maneuver. 10/6		MX will not be in place until mid-1980s. 2/3	

Year	Nuclear Weapons	Missiles, Subs, Bombers	Defense	Space	General Power Balance, War Winning Ability, Deterrence	Doctrine	Predictions	Postdictions
1				A congressional committee recommended a two-year delay, because of competition for money in the space budget, on a project to send two spacecraft around the sun, one to look at each of the solar poles. 12/15	The Economist says the recent rapid increases in Soviet nuclear strength are a threat to the West that could be met by higher American defense spending. 12/8		The long-running disarmament talks in Geneva reopened on January 24th. An effective arms control agreement is not likely if the lesser states see the giants strengthening instead of reducing their nuclear arsenals. 2/3	
9							The decade of the '1980s will be a period of potential danger but also of opportunity. If the West could generate an organizing strategy, an organizing will, the Soviet geopolitical position would become precarious and subject to disintegrating tendencies within the Soviet system. (Kissinger) 2/10	
7							There is now no question that by the early 1980s the Soviet Union will have the ability to destroy all the American land-based missile sites with a single strike. 4/14	
9							Salt-2 ratification debate in US Senate is almost certain to lead to more American spending on nuclear weapons. 6/9	

Year	Nuclear Weapons	Delivery: Missiles, Subs, Bombers	Defense	Space	General Power Balance, War Winning Ability, Deterrence	Doctrine	Predictions	Postdictions
1							In order to get passage of the SALT-2 treaty in the US Senate, the price the administration will almost certainly pay is increased military spending, including development of the MX missile. 6/9	
9							Russian advances in size and accuracy of missiles will render the present fixed Minuteman and Titan ICBM force vulnerable to a surprise attack in the early 1980s. 6/16	
7							The MX missiles, projected for deployment in the late 1980s, will each carry 10 nuclear warheads, 2,000 in all, and will be accurate enough to threaten the Russian land-based missile force with a first-strike attack. 6/16	
9							By around 1982, SU will be able to destroy almost all US land-based missiles at a single stroke. 6/23	
							In the early 80s, SU will have superiority in nuclear weight. 6/23	

Year	Nuclear Weapons	Delivery: Missiles, Subs, Bombers	Defense	Space	General Power Balance, War Winning Ability, Deterrence	Doctrine	Predictions	Postdictions
1							During the period of Salt-2, SU will come to surpass US in most categories of nuclear strength--including deliverable megatonnage and number of missile warheads. 6/23	
9							Under Salt-2, the Russians are allowed to have 308 super-big missiles and the US none. 6/23	
7							The Economist printed a chart showing what each side would be permitted under Salt-2, due to expire in 1985. Total launchers: 2,250	
9							Mirved missiles (land or sea based) plus bombers with cruise missiles: 1,320	
							Mirved missiles (land or sea based) 1,200	
							Mirved land based ballistic missiles 820	
							Russia will be permitted to deploy 308 SS-18 heavy missiles with up to 10 warheads each, within the treaty limits. US cannot deploy any heavy missiles. Protocol, due to expire 12/31/81:	
							1. Testing and deployment of mobile land based ballistic missiles are banned.	
							2. Deployment of land or sea launched cruise missiles with range of over 600 km is prohibited. 6/23	

Year	Nuclear Weapons	Missiles, Subs, Bombers	Defense	Space	General Power Balance, War Winning Ability, Deterrence	Doctrine	Predictions	Postdictions
1							The early 1980s will see the SU at a moment of maximum military advantage against the West. 8/4	
9							A "real" 3 percent increment in the defense budget "for the next several years" ought to be enough to maintain a balance with the Soviet defense effort. (Sec'y Defense Brown) 9/8	
7							At some time in the early 1980s--the best guess is about 1982--the growth of Russia's missile force will reach the point at which it can destroy virtually all the Americans' land-based missiles in a surprise attack, together with many of their missile submarines and nuclear bombers, by the use of only a portion of Russia's warheads. The surviving American submarines and bombers would be too inaccurate or too slow to destroy Russia's reserve of still unused warheads. 9/8	
9								

Year	Nuclear Weapons	Delivery: Missiles, Subs, Bombers	Defense	Space	General Power Balance, War Winning Ability, Deterrence	Doctrine	Predictions	Postdictions
1							The advantage Russia has won by a dozen years of rearming while the West has dozed gives it a dangerous opportunity in the early and middle 1980s; after that Russia's own problems will start to close in on it (drop in economic growth rate; shortage of oil; by end of century, one in three conscripts in Soviet army will be Moslems). 9/8	
9							The Senate hearings on Salt-2 have convinced everyone that Russian power, both nuclear and conventional, will make the early 1980s a dangerous time for the West. Salt or no Salt, unless the US spends more money on defense. 9/8	
7							Some time in the early 1980s Russia will have enough nuclear-tipped missiles, with enough accuracy to destroy essential all of America's land-based missiles--while they are still in their silos--with a first strike. 9/22	
9								

Year	Nuclear Weapons	Delivery: Missiles, Subs, Bombers	Defense	Space	General Power Balance, War Winning Ability, Deterrence	Doctrine	Predictions	Postdictions
1							By the late 1980s, when the MX would be in place, the Russians might quite possibly have enough warheads to shoot two--the required number to ensure a hit --at every one of the holes or shelters the US would build into its MX system.	
9								
7								
9								

Year	Nuclear Weapons	Missiles, Subs, Bombers	Delivery:	Defense	Space	General Power Balance, War Winning Ability, Deterrence	Doctrine	Predictions	Postdictions
	<p>The Americans plan to equip their Trident with about 10 independently targetable warheads each, or with a slightly smaller number plus a few decoys to help penetrate Moscow's missile defenses. 5/10</p> <p>In a letter, J.F. Lehman of Washington, D.C. disagrees with an earlier letterwriter (Bessie) SU would need 11,200 warheads for a preemptive strike on the planned US land-based ICBM force alone; additional warheads would be required for a credible second-strike capability. To carry this out would be extremely costly to the Soviets, and could be countered by the US. 7/19</p> <p>Except in numbers of warheads, Russia has outreached US for several years in most measures of nuclear strength, including megatons of explosive power. 8/9</p> <p>Congressman Bob Carr disagrees with reader Lehman. He maintains that without SALT-2, Russians could and would deploy the 11,200 warheads needed to saturate the US MX missile system. 8/30</p>	<p>The Pentagon's budget request for the Trident-2 missile for 1981 has been cut severely. Instead of developing the D-5 (Trident-2) which could carry six or seven 350-kiloton warheads, operate up to 6,000 miles from Russia and knock out more than one silo, they will upgrade the smaller C-4 already in service. The C-4, with a 500-kiloton warhead, can carry only two 150-kiloton warheads. It is the only one of its kind. The US might put a 374-page civil defense handbook published by the Russians in 1970. Russia has made a substantial civil defense. Preparations. So have Holland, Switzerland, and Sweden. 2/23</p> <p>The Russians have only one anti-ballistic missile defense system, which will come into service about 1987. The Economist thinks this plan is more sensible than previous ones and, since the MX missile represents America's last chance to keep its land-based missiles safe against a Soviet surprise attack, that the US should get going on it. 5/10</p>	<p>The Carter administration presented a new plan, "loading dock," for deploying its new MX missile, which will come into service about 1987. The Economist thinks this plan is more sensible than previous ones and, since the MX missile represents America's last chance to keep its land-based missiles safe against a Soviet surprise attack, that the US should get going on it. 5/10</p>	<p>In the US, civil defense used to be criticized as likely to "destabilize the nuclear standard-offense." Russia thinks that the first launch is scheduled for June, but September is likely date. The more flights should begin in the last quarter of 1981. 1/19</p> <p>The European Space Agency's Ariane is on schedule and is poised to take advantage of rising demand for satellites and delays plaguing its formidable American rival, the space shuttle. 5/10</p> <p>The Russians are now militarily stronger than the Americans "in virtually every category." (Ronald Reagan) 3/29</p> <p>In a letter, a reader from Los Angeles (K. Bodger) refers to the "current impotence of western diplomacy in the face of western-Soviet nuclear parity or even western inferiority." 4/12</p>	<p>Prices for use of NASA's space shuttle are being worked out. Over 300 flights have already been booked. First launch is scheduled for June, but September is likely date. The more flights should begin in the last quarter of 1981. 1/19</p> <p>The European Space Agency's Ariane is on schedule and is poised to take advantage of rising demand for satellites and delays plaguing its formidable American rival, the space shuttle. 5/10</p> <p>The Russians are now militarily stronger than the Americans "in virtually every category." (Ronald Reagan) 3/29</p> <p>In a letter, a reader from Los Angeles (K. Bodger) refers to the "current impotence of western diplomacy in the face of western-Soviet nuclear parity or even western inferiority." 4/12</p>	<p>Russia knew the world would not go to war over Afghanistan; that such is America's weakness of will and strategic direction these days, it would get away with its act of contempt. Afghanistan was lost by the falling deterrence of America. 1/5</p> <p>Russia's invasion of Afghanistan has led President Carter to make building America's military strength his number one goal for the 1980s. He wants to increase defense spending by 4.5 percent or more in real terms for the next five years. 1/26</p> <p>After Carter's actions regarding Afghanistan, questions continued to be raised about the state of American military preparedness and the areas in which increases were to be made in defense spending. The new "rapid deployment force" would not be able to function effectively for several years. 2/23</p> <p>In most of the world's most important places, the Russians now have superiority in nonnuclear forces--and parity, or even an advantage, in nuclear ones. Afghanistan has revealed a world in which the balance of power has perceptibly shifted. America no longer commands the authority it did in 1962 in the confrontation over Cuba. 3/15</p> <p>The Russians are now militarily stronger than the Americans "in virtually every category." (Ronald Reagan) 3/29</p> <p>In a letter, a reader from Los Angeles (K. Bodger) refers to the "current impotence of western diplomacy in the face of western-Soviet nuclear parity or even western inferiority." 4/12</p>	<p>The lesson to be learned from two false alerts last week in the US missile war-ning system is that the idea of "launch on warning" is madness. 6/14</p> <p>In a letter, reader A.S. Brown of Carmichael, California, hiding the missile silos has been devised. 3/1</p> <p>The Economist is wrong in assuming that the president has the ultimate authority to press the nuclear button. He cites a Chicago Sun-Times correspondent who was told by White House officials that the end of the 1980s and thus basic authority to remove their one great advantage of nuclear weapons. This authority may be delegated to subordinate officers in the chain of command virtually without limitations. "MX will shorten the dangerous period just about which Russia will have the power to destroy virtually all America's land-based missiles in a single cataclysmic blow. 5/10</p> <p>Development of massive towed hydrophonic arrays and of techniques for tracking a submarine's heat trail through water could make submarines vulnerable by the end of the 1980s and thus basic authority to remove their one great advantage of nuclear weapons. This authority may be delegated to subordinate officers in the chain of command virtually without limitations. "MX will shorten the dangerous period just about which Russia will have the power to destroy virtually all America's land-based missiles in a single cataclysmic blow. 5/10</p>	<p>In 1962, at the time of the Cuban missile crisis, the SU had about 70 long-range missile silos that took 20 hours to fuel, which was longer than it would take US planes to get to the bases. (Kissinger) 12/27</p>	

Year	Nuclear Weapons	Missiles, Subs, Bombers	Delivery:	Defense	Space	General Power Balance, War Winning Ability, Deterrence	Doctrine	Predictions	Postdictions
1			"Landing dock," the latest proposal for hiding and protecting the MX, the US's new intercontinental ballistic missile, would require 9,000 warheads if the Russians wanted to be sure of destroying all of them. This would leave the Russians few or none for a second strike on American cities. 5/31	Some defense analysts think that instead of a mobile-basing system for the MX it would be best to put the MX off on shelves in fixed silos and defend them with the ABMs that the US is allowed under SALT-1 but which it never built. 7/12	Ariane's second test flight was a failure, but ESA is confident third test will go off on schedule in November. America's shuttle is falling farther behind scheduled: first operational flight has been postponed from March to September 1981, but it probably won't get its first test flight until summer 1981, so unlikely to be launching satellites before Christmas 1981. 6/28	In a letter, a reader from Montreal (Shamsul Islam) states that "the balance of power has already tilted in favour of Russia." 4/12	"City-busting" is no longer a good enough deterrent because the Russians would know and would know the Americans know that any Russian missiles not used in a first strike would then be able to obliterate the US. 8/16	The Russians are nearing the point at which they will be able to destroy virtually all America's land-based missiles at a blow, by using only a portion of their own force. 6/16	
9			In a letter, reader Charles Bestor of Salt Lake City writes that the MX will not provide the US with an invulnerable deterrent force. The theory that the Russians would have to allocate so many warheads to knock out the MX that they would not have enough left to disable the Minuteman system works only if the Russians are limited in warheads. They are capable of exceeding SALT-2 limits on warheads. 6/7	The existence of rural Russia's extensive underground shelters makes the nuclear option less terrifying than it is to the West, although the West has never understood this. 12/27	Unlike the Republican candidate, Mr. John Anderson stresses as his goal "essential equivalence" with the SU in military matters, rather than superiority. 9/6	Russia's arrival at nuclear equality with the US means that it is in a position to use its huge nonnuclear superiority in Southwest Asia and its growing nonnuclear lead in Europe without the old assumption that this would lead to nuclear war. 7/12	Pravda describes Carter's Presidential Directive 59 (shift from "mutual assured destruction" to targeting Soviet military installations, missile sites and command centers) as "a strategy of nuclear adventurism." 8/16	--the "window of vulnerability" or "strategic bathtub." 7/12	
8			US needs a mobile MX missile until submarine launched missiles are accurate enough to hit Russian missile silos. 6/14	The Soviet Union has offered to take an Indian cosmonaut on one of its space-ships. The offer has been accepted in principle by Mrs. Gandhi. 7/26	Russia will be militarily stronger than the West for much of the 1980s, meaning that it can deploy stronger nonnuclear forces in southern Asia, central Europe and northern Africa than the West can, and has neutralized the West's former nuclear counterweight. 11/8	The Economist quotes from Soviet officers' Handbook, issued by the ministry of defense in Moscow to show that the Soviet's own policy agrees with Carter's: the best way to avoid nuclear war is to be prepared to fight one. 8/9	Pravda describes Carter's Presidential Directive 59 (shift from "mutual assured destruction" to targeting Soviet military installations, missile sites and command centers) as "a strategy of nuclear adventurism." 8/16	American current advantage in numbers of warheads is rapidly disappearing as Russians deploy large numbers of independently targetable reentry vehicles in their big new missiles. 8/9	
0			US has let itself become vulnerable to a Russian first strike because it has failed to modernize its missile force while the Russians for 15 years have been steadily expanding and improving theirs. The Americans have to build and deploy weapons that could counter-attack Russia's missile silos even after a Russian first strike had landed. 6/14	Mr. Brezhnev's successor will inherit a clear temporary superiority in high-technology (therefore soon-to-be-obsolete) military power. 12/27	Russia has neutralized America's former nuclear advantage and will therefore be in a position to use its own nonnuclear superiority in Asia and Europe in the service of a buccaneering foreign policy. 12/27	Russia is now approaching the time when its expanding missile force--including its 306 huge 10-warhead SS-18s--may be able to destroy virtually all America's land-based missiles at a blow and leave a lot of Russia's missiles unused. 8/16			

Year	Nuclear Weapons	Missiles, Subs, Bombers	Defense	Space	General Power Balance, War Winning Ability, Deterrence	Doctrine	Predictions	Postdictions
		<p>Delivery:</p> <p>The Senate voted \$91m to the air force for research and development of a new strategic bomber: either a "stretched" version of the F-111 fighter bomber or an entirely new one, to replace the cancelled B-1. 7/12</p> <p>There is a fundamental problem with the cruise missile: the difficulty of matching an optically derived contour map stored in the missile's memory with the actual readings taken in flight by a radar altimeter in its nose. 7/12</p> <p>Britain will buy the American Trident-1 ballistic missile for its British-built submarines. 7/19</p> <p>In the past 10 years, Russians have bought four new models of intercontinental ballistic missiles. SU has for several years out-reached US in numbers of missiles and total weight that can be lifted to target. It is about to reach equality (at least) with US in intercontinental power. 8/9</p> <p>A much higher percentage of US warheads are carried by manned bombers (which have a smaller chance of getting through than missiles do) and by submarines (whose missiles are not accurate enough to destroy the other side's missile silos and only about half of which are at sea at any given time). This diminishes the US advantage in raw warheads. 8/9</p>		<p>Voyager-1's close encounter with Saturn last week proved spectacular. 11/22</p>	<p>Soviet expansion into Afghanistan is the more or less predictable result of the steady accumulation of Soviet assertiveness that started in the mid-60s. It may help the West take measures to counter further expansion of Soviet power. The right combination will have to be a mixture of economic penalties and military deterrence. Increase in NATO defense spending is necessary to make sure Russia does not take the lead in the nuclear balance and to prevent Russia from getting a local nonnuclear lead in any important part of the world that it could exploit under the umbrella of nuclear parity. 1/12</p>	<p>Mr. Carter believed on entering office that the threat of destroying each other's major cities should be enough to prevent either side from starting a nuclear war. He asked his secretary-to-be, Mr. Brown, to see if the American arsenal could be cut from 1,800 missiles to 200. Mr. James Schlesinger, when he was at the Pentagon in 1974, proposed counterforce targeting. Under Carter, Brown and Brzezinski have become converts to the same idea, which Carter formalized in Presidential Directive 59. 8/16</p>	<p>By the end of the 1980s, Russia is likely to be entering a triple crisis internally caused by a congenitally incompetent economy, social-cum-racial unrest at home and upheavals in its empire. 11/8</p> <p>The military prospect for 1981-85: Russia has neutralized America's former nuclear advantage and will therefore be in a position to use its own nonnuclear superiority in Asia and Europe in the service of a buccaneering foreign policy. 12/27</p> <p>Most analysts now believe that Russia would win almost any war against America in 1981-85, and in a first-strike nuclear holocaust the Russians might kill up to half of the 220m Americans while losing fewer than 20m Russians. 12/27</p> <p>During 1981-89 Russia will have a brief and obsolescing superiority of military power. 12/27</p> <p>Brezhnev's successors will believe in 1981-89 that America would easily lose a nuclear war. 12/27</p>	

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1		If a Russian first strike wiped out the land-based missiles, America's surviving bombers and submarine-launched missiles are not accurate enough to hit back at the unused portion of Russia's missile force. 8/16				In a letter, Adam Yarmolinsky takes exception to the Economist's statement that from 1960 to 1974 an American president could respond to a Soviet nuclear attack only by destroying Soviet cities, and that US is only now facing up to problems of secure command and control in a nuclear exchange. He maintains that Presidential Directive 59 codifies established doctrine. 9/6		
9		The MX mobile land-based missile and the Trident submarine-launched missile, planned for the second half of the 1980s, along with a radiation-proof communications system, will provide the US with an effective second-strike force. 8/16						
8		In a letter, reader Nathan H. Mazer of Ogden, Utah, disagrees with reader Bes-tor: the Soviets do not have an unlimited capability to build warheads, missiles and launchers endlessly to match the number of American shelters for MX missiles. 8/23						
0		A huge explosion destroyed a Titan intercontinental missile and its silo on Sept. 18. The 15-year old Titan is due to be replaced by the solid-fueled MX rocket. But that will take many years and in the meantime, the Titan with its leak-prone skin, 100 tons of volatile liquid fuel, and gigantic warhead will probably continue to present problems. Less accurate than the Minuteman, it has no very useful role in destroying enemy silos. 9/27						
		Although Mr. Carter cancelled the B-1 bomber, he approves of the MX missile. 11/1						
		The Reagan administration may include in the defense budget money to redesign the B-1 bomber that Carter tried to kill. 12/20						
						Carter slowed the B-1 bomber, the MX, Trident, etc., citing the mutually assured destruction ("mad") doctrine that "just one of our relatively invulnerable Poseidon submarines" (160 nuclear warheads) "would deter Russia since each of these warheads could be targeted to attack a Soviet city." 12/27		

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If the new administration decides quickly what basing plan to adopt, MX deployment could probably be speeded up by a year, to 1985. 12/20

The Carter administration made news when it let drop that the US was working on an intercontinental manned bomber, called Stealth, that would be almost invisible to radar. 10/4

A little computer in the nose of those flying bombs called cruise missiles is supposed to keep them flying exactly on course at 100 feet above the ground, regardless of whether the terrain is hilly or flat. But, for all the money being put into the program, it isn't working too well. Almost half the tests to date have failed. 1/19

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	Delivery:							
	American Roman Catholic arch-bishops and bishops are calling for a freeze on the production of nuclear weapons, asking their congregations to refuse to pay half their federal income tax as a form of protest against nuclear weapons, asking workers who assemble nuclear warheads to leave their jobs. 10/24	Russia's new multi-warhead missiles are accurate enough to destroy American missiles in their silos. 7/18		America's military men are greatly concerned about Russia's apparent lead in the military use of space (e.g., its recent launch of a killer satellite). The shuttle is seen by Washington (and Moscow) as the Americans' way to catch up. 4/4	The Soviet arms build-up, by cancelling America's previous nuclear superiority while increasing Russia's nonnuclear lead, means that a successful Soviet invasion of Western Europe is no longer unthinkable. The balance of power has tilted in Russia's favor. Unless Russia is persuaded to do some disarming, the West has to do some rearming. 2/28	Reader H. W. King of Olan, Argyll writes that the American security of defense, asked in a BBC interview to reply to the Soviet call for a renunciation of first-use of nuclear weapons, said that the US never contemplated first use. "Our forces and our whole strategy, our whole basis for constructing all of these things is simply to have enough of a retaliatory response to deter the Soviets from ever starting." 10/31	If you look at the sort of nuclear weapons America can build over the next 10 years (and those Russia can build), it seems almost impossible that the easy superiority of the 1950s--when America could hit Russia without being seriously hit back--can be recaptured. 6/6	
1					Mr. Weinberger is asking Congress to raise defense spending by 14 percent in 1982. He wants a five-year rearmament program in steady steps of roughly 7 percent annual real growth, to reverse more than 10 years of being outspent by the SU. These increases mark a decisive change in national policy. 3/14		Some time soon, perhaps next year, Russia will have enough of its accurate missilehead multistage missiles to threaten America's entire land-based missile force. 7/18	
9	America has not got enough weapons-grade plutonium to build the 14,000 new nuclear warheads President Reagan wants added to the stockpile over the next eight years. The US energy department has produced two controversial proposals that blur the distinction between civil and military uses of plutonium, part of America's non-proliferation policy. 11/28	The Carter administration scheme for shutting 200 intercontinental missiles among 4,600 shelters in two western states is not likely to be supported by Weinberger. It has met with opposition from environmentalists, disarmers and political leaders of the states involved. The governor of Utah stated that the whole system would not be complete until 1989 by which time the Russians could have built more missiles to maintain their superiority or could have devised some way of detecting which shelters missiles were in, making the system useless. 7/25			Helmut Schmidt has always argued that arms limitation can be agreed to only on the basis of a balance of forces. He admits, however, that balance is a difficult term to define, particularly in Europe, with the bulk of America's forces across the Atlantic and the Russians just the other side of the globe. 3/14	The Economist re-views Michael Mandelbaum's The Nuclear Question: The United States and Nuclear Weapons 1946-1976, which traces the main currents of American policies on nuclear weapons, which are only now beginning to shift; and Lawrence Freedman's The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy which concludes that deterrence works not because it is logical but because an unknown abyss awaits. 12/5	By 1982 or 1983 the Russians will have at least a theoretical ability to destroy virtually all of America's land-based missiles, when the Americans can destroy only about one third of theirs. 7/25	
8					The Germans are concerned that the Americans, in their determination to draw level --if not to overtake--the SU in military power, could neglect the need for arms control. 3/14		If the Russians succeed in arms negotiations in their efforts to push the West into making one-sided concessions, by the mid-1980s they will be gazing down on the West from the battlements of military superiority. 7/25	
1					One of the main goals of the Reagan administration is to reequalize the military balance of power, thrown out of rearmament that was not matched by the West. 3/28			

Year	Nuclear Weapons	Missiles, Subs, Bombers	Defense	Space	General Power Balance, War Winning Ability, Deterrence	Doctrine	Predictions	Postdictions
	<p>The Reagan administration is working on a strategic materials policy that will raise America's stockpile of strategic raw materials high enough to sit out a three-year national emergency. (to keep its land-based missile force invulnerable to attack) and a new and more accurate submarine-launched missile. 8/29 Russians. 12/5</p> <p>The American defense department has increased its budget for development of very high-speed integrated circuits (VHSICs) which will be needed in weapons of the future which will make demands on electronics that commercial microchips cannot meet. Russia's improved electronics know-how has Western defense experts worried. 12/5</p> <p>NATO is superior to Russia only in long-range missile warheads, but not by much and maybe not for much longer. On most other scores--accuracy, numbers of warheads and explosive power--Russia is superior. 12/26</p>	<p>In a letter, a British reader (J. A. Mills) writes that the Soviet Union is building an SS-20 missile every five days and a nuclear submarine every six weeks. 8/22</p> <p>To keep the balance of terror in balance, US needs a mobile MX missile (to keep its land-based missile force invulnerable to attack) and a new and more accurate submarine-launched missile. 8/29</p> <p>In a letter, Robert Conquest of Stanford, California contends that The Economist's article favoring the stealth bomber over the B-1 does not take account of "American defence intelligence," which favors the B-1 because of uncertainties in stealth technology and doubts about its invulnerability to possible future countermeasures. 9/5</p> <p>A reader (P.L. Coleman) from Fiji writes that a mobile cruise missile sited in American and allied territory would be easier to keep secure than a few expensive MX missiles. 9/5</p> <p>It is important for the US to proceed quickly with a survivable ICBM program to stem shut the "window of vulnerability." A system that could survive a first strike could be in place by 1986. 9/12</p>	<p>America's military effort in space has concentrated on spy-in-the-sky weather and navigational satellites. American military spending on space will be relatively modest during the 1980s. 4/4</p> <p>There will probably be an American space station, if for no other reason than that the Russians have one and it might be important to the balance of military space power. 4/4</p> <p>Killer satellites for shooting down other satellites are being tested by both Russians and Americans. 4/18</p>	<p>The strategy NATO thought it had to keep the Soviet army out of Western Europe has been demolished by changes in the fast-West balance of power. The Americans no longer lead the Russians in intercontinental-range nuclear weapons, and in medium-range and battlefield ones, Russia is streets ahead. 5/9</p> <p>In a letter, Valery Nikolayev of Novosti Press Agency, Moscow writes: "The current military and strategic parity" between East and West provides a realistic opportunity for curbing the arms race . . . since neither side can allow the other side to achieve military superiority." 5/16</p> <p>Russia has been piling up its military strength for the past 15 years, and is willing to use it. The Americans have responded with a rearmament program and a fuzzy cloud of anti-Soviet rhetoric. 6/6</p> <p>Carter's abortive Salt-2 treaty which gave Russia at least a theoretical chance of hitting America without being hit back has to be put right. 6/6</p> <p>Nuclear equality means that Russia cannot be allowed to have superiority in the non-nuclear weapons which nuclear equality enables it to use. 6/6</p> <p>The first program in a five-part CBS series on American defense questions whether America is as vulnerable to a Russian nuclear first strike as President Reagan has made out. 6/13</p>	<p>Within a year or two, the Russians will have enough accurate warheads to destroy virtually all America's land-based missiles, while still keeping some of their own weapons in reserve. US submarine missiles are not accurate enough to destroy Russia's reserve of unused missiles. They could only be aimed at Russian cities, in the certain knowledge that Russia's reserve could then obliterate the US. 8/29</p> <p>By some time in the early 1980s Russia's new intercontinental ballistic missiles will probably be able to destroy America's entire land-based nuclear missile force in a single cataclysmic attack. 9/12</p> <p>Within a year or so, Russia will probably have enough accurate warheads to destroy virtually all of America's land-based missiles in a surprise attack, using only a part of its own missile force. 10/10</p>			

Year	Nuclear Weapons	Missiles, Subs, Bombers	Delivery:	Defense	Space	General Power Balance, War Winning Ability, Deterrence	Doctrine	Predictions	Postdictions
		Weinberger wants the B-1 bomber to replace the aging B-52s until the Stealth (A10) is ready. The Economist thinks the B-1 should stay cancelled and the production of the A10 should be speeded up. 9/12			The way heat-resistant tiles fell from the shuttle during take-off indicates the design is still fragile and not much past the experimental stage. 4/18	Conservatives as well as liberals are questioning President Reagan's intention to spend \$1.3 trillion over the next five years to improve America's defenses. 6/13		"Window of vulnerability" is the phrase defense planners use to describe the years, roughly 1982-87, in which American land-based long-range missiles could theoretically become vulnerable to a surprise attack by newer, more accurate Russian missiles. 10/10	
1		Development of the Trident-2 missile, more accurate and with longer range than Trident-1, should be kept up, ready to be rushed into service if a breakthrough in Russian detection methods warrants it. 9/12			The shuttle shuttled forth--and back. 4/18	Under Reagan's leadership, with a strong domestic economy, a strong commitment to defense, and a foreign policy in which general principles get turned into specific actions, US can once again command the confidence of the free world and the respect of the rest. 7/4		Once "stealth" technology is incorporated in cruise missiles, Russia's present radar-based air defense system would be useless. It is not likely that Russia will build other types of sensors to detect them, or improve its missile defenses enough to stop Trident. 10/24	
9		Reagan announced his program to strengthen America's nuclear armory: it will improve the system for command and control of nuclear forces; improve air defense; resurrect the B-1; push ahead on Trident-2 submarine-launched missile, to be in service by 1989; starting in 1984, deploy long-range nuclear cruise missiles on submarines; build 100 10-warhead MX intercontinental ballistic missiles to be placed in super-hardened silos. The Economist is critical because it leaves the US land-based missile sites at risk until 1989. 10/10			Space scientists' hopes that the success of the shuttle would make President Reagan relent about cuts in space R&D were not realized. The exploration of space has been clobbered: three projects have been cancelled and others delayed, but most NASA projects will continue. 5/2	The review of Soviet Strategy, edited by John Baylis and Gerald Segal, states that maintenance of strategic parity can prevent the SU from switching its war-fighting deterrence doctrine from the defense to the offense. Yet, as the book points out, the achievement by the SU of strategic parity with the US may make--some would argue has already made--the SU more adventurous in using its enormous conventional military power. 7/18		There is little doubt that Russia's warheads will soon be precise and reliable enough to destroy virtually without warning, US missiles sitting in silos in the US itself. 11/14	

Year	Nuclear Weapons	Missiles, Subs, Bombers	Delivery:	Defense	Space	General Power Balance, War Winning Ability, Deterrence	Doctrine	Predictions	Postdictions
		James Schlesinger and Harold Brown say putting MX missiles into fixed silos does not reduce and may even increase their vulnerability. Senator John Tower, Chairman of the Armed Services Committee agrees: so does Melvin Price of the House Armed Services Committee. 10/10			Space research has soared steadily along in Russia unlike in America where it advances in flights and starts. The Soyuz spacecraft can make maneuvers in space that are the envy of the Americans; docking with the Salyut-6 space station has become routine; supplies are regularly ferried to the space station by the automatic and unmanned Progress cargo craft; space engineers are believed to be working on a new 12-man space station the CIA reckons could be in orbit by 1985. 5/30	Michael Mandelbaum, in his book <u>The Nuclear Revolution</u> , maintains that the balance of power that began after World War II has continued for 36 years, and that the nuclear arms race has actually helped to prevent war because nuclear war conflicts with man's idea of his immortality. What is unthinkable cannot happen. 8/15			
1		General David Jones, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, disapproved of the MX decision. 10/10				In a letter, an organizer for the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament states that it is the United States which is known to be striving for a first-strike capability, and which is leading the arms race for qualitative and quantitative superiority. 8/22			
9		US sea-launched missiles are not yet accurate enough to be aimed at Russian silos. Communications with submarines are still tricky. So the US cannot yet put its deterrent out to sea. With the Trident-2 in 1989, this might become possible. 10/10				A British reader (Bridget Houghton) writes: "It is essential that we maintain the balance of nuclear power between east and west, and preserve the stalemate which has averted, and will continue to avert, a nuclear third world war. By banning nuclear arms in Europe, we would tip the balance..." 8/22			
8		Weinberger is now talking about 1989 instead of "in the 1990s" as the time when the Stealth bomber could be operational. This increases the controversy between proponents of Stealth and the B-1, which will be operational in 1986. 10/10				British reader J. A. Mills writes: The surest way of preserving our peace is to restore the balance at every level. To rely solely on conventional forces would make a Soviet nuclear offensive more attractive and thus more likely. 8/22			
1		Trident-2 has longer range and is more accurate than Trident-1, but The Economist thinks a cruise missile force would be much less costly for Britain and just as good a deterrent. 10/24				British reader M. Braithwaite says that the SU has lagged behind the US in terms of almost every nuclear device ever since 1945, and that it could be argued it is still behind if we admit that number of warheads and accuracy of delivery systems are more crucial than total explosive power. 8/22			
						The arrival of nuclear parity may mean that in future the principal use of nuclear weapons is to prevent the other man using his. 8/29			

Year	Nuclear Weapons	Missiles, Subs, Bombers	Delivery:	Defense	Space	General Power Balance, War Winning Ability, Deterrence	Doctrine	Predictions	Postdictions
1		Nothing in Reagan's plan to improve America's nuclear armory--the MX missile, more cruise missiles, the B-1 bomber--goes beyond the limits set under the unratified Salt-2 treaty, and Reagan is now proposing cuts in the Salt-2 numbers. This should reassure nervous Europeans. 11/14			America's shuttle Columbia was set to return to space when a mini-disaster delayed the launch. Even if the second mission goes well, the shuttle still faces problems; it seems unlikely that it will be possible to turn the shuttle around between flights in two weeks; and budget trimming has cut back the number of launches per year NASA will be permitted. 10/3	Because of the coming vulnerability of the US land-based missile force and Russia's aggressive political posture around the world, Carter increased defense spending, and Reagan, who had criticized Carter's weak defense record, felt he had to spend even more: a 14.6 percent real increase in 1982 and a 7 percent per year real rise in fiscal 1983-1986. 9/15			
9		There is confusion about the costs and capabilities of the MX and the B-1 bomber. 11/14				The US released a much-advertised assessment of Russian military power which stated that Russia, after years of build-up now has an awesome array of military power. Figures differed only slightly from those produced by the independent IISS and the US refused to publish satellite photos that made the NATO defense ministers gasp, so the booklet will not have much impact. 10/3			
8		Because markets for most rare and exotic minerals are too complicated it is impossible to trace supply sources for minerals used in making missiles, tanks, and aircraft. (Kenneth Foster, Pentagon) 12/5				British reader C. Walker writes there is an equilibrium which must be kept so that neither side feels threatened or defenseless or has a possible advantage from war. The pursuit of strength to keep equilibrium has led to an arms race. The only way out is talks to reduce the armory in such a way that the balance remains, though with less weight. 10/10			
1		US ability to retaliate after a Russian first strike is limited: submarine launched missiles are not accurate enough to hit silos; communication with the submarines could be knocked out in the attack; bombers would be too slow. 12/26			After an initial cut of 9 percent, the Reagan administration is planning to cut another 6 percent from NASA's budget. Since the shuttle gets priority and continues to run over budget, it is exploration of the solar system that is being sacrificed.	The danger of the "window of vulnerability" is that the Americans, rightly or wrongly, might think that the Russians could be prepared to risk a first strike. That would give the Russians an enormous psychological advantage. Even a theoretical first-strike capability puts a powerful wind in Russia's sails. 10/10			
		Russia has more nuclear delivery vehicles than NATO. 12/26							

Year	Nuclear Weapons	Delivery: Missiles, Subs, Bombers	Defense	Space	General Power Balance, War Winning Ability, Deterrence	Doctrine	Predictions	Postdictions
1		Russian's aim is to build almost half as many missiles again as the US. Soviet Union has improved the accuracy of its new intercontinental missiles, the SS-17, SS-18 and SS-19, to the point where they can destroy other countries' land-based missiles in their concrete silos. This has created a fundamental change in the nuclear relationship between the US and the SU. 12/26		The second flight of the space shuttle Columbia had to be cut short because of trouble with a fuel cell. Although more went right than wrong, the flight raised questions about NASA's ability to cope with a reusable craft as complex as the shuttle. The Pentagon, which believes it needs the shuttle to catch up with the Russians' military use of space, is especially concerned. The cost has also meant cuts in other NASA projects. 11/21	The Reagan administration made clear early that defense requirements, not arms control, would govern its new strategic program. 10/10			
9					To advocates of arms control, the Reagan administration is saying that the US must negotiate from a position of strength. Its strategic weapons program is designed to reduce overall the vulnerability of American forces. 10/10			
8					A London reader (Gladwyn) writes that instead of spending countless billions to achieve a "war-winning" nuclear superiority, the West, and especially the Europeans, while if possibly achieving a nuclear balance, should put that money into building up their "conventional" forces, thus establishing a real balance of power in the vital European theatre of operations. 10/31			
1					In addition to being militarily stronger in Europe (and enormously stronger in the oil-producing Gulf region), the Russians are on the verge of being able to destroy, without warning, the Americans' accurate counterattack missiles sitting in silos in the US. The aim of Reagan's rearmament program is to make possible US negotiations on arms control from a position nearer to military equality. If Russia is permitted to keep its emerging across-the-board superiority, the temptation to exploit it will be irresistible. 11/14			

Year	Nuclear Weapons	Delivery: Missiles, Subs, Bombers	Defense	Space	General Power Balance, War Winning Ability, Deterrence	Doctrine	Predictions	Postdictions
1					from Jenera, Ohio, reader James W. Child writes that the window of vulnerability is all too real and the US is not doing as much as it might to shut it. However, the B-1 bomber and the submarine-launched cruise missile represent credible, near-term adjuncts to a secure strategic deterrent. They close the window, if only a bit. 11/21			
9					The Reagan administration wants to reopen strategic arms-control talks with the Russians, the aim of which would be large reductions in each side's strategic arsenal--"Start II" for Strategic Arms Reduction Talks. 11/21			
8					Russia's invasion of Afghanistan shocked the Americans out of their post-Vietnam introspection. Russia's 11-14 percent expenditure on defense has given it formidable military strength. It is essential to recreate a secure balance of power. America's new-found determination starts from a conventional and nuclear disadvantage, but the US can catch up. 12/26			
1					The possession of a theoretical first-strike capacity gives Russia a psychological head-start in every confrontation of wills with the West. The Russians will threaten to use ordinary, nonnuclear force more confidently in any such crisis. The West will be more hesitant to counter the threat. 12/26			
					One of the main changes the 1970s brought to the worldwide balance of power was the enormous growth of the Russian navy. 12/26			

Year	Nuclear Weapons	Delivery: Missiles, Subs, Bombers	Defense	Space	General Power Balance, War Winning Ability, Deterrence	Doctrine	Predictions	Postdictions
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President Reagan has just been obliged to admit that America's nuclear "window of vulnerability" will remain unshut for several years to come. 10/17

It is not plausible to argue that NATO's attempt to restore the nuclear balance in Europe increases the risk of nuclear war. It is the West's emerging inferiority in nuclear weapons that creates the possibility of a Russian attack. 10/17

Appendix B

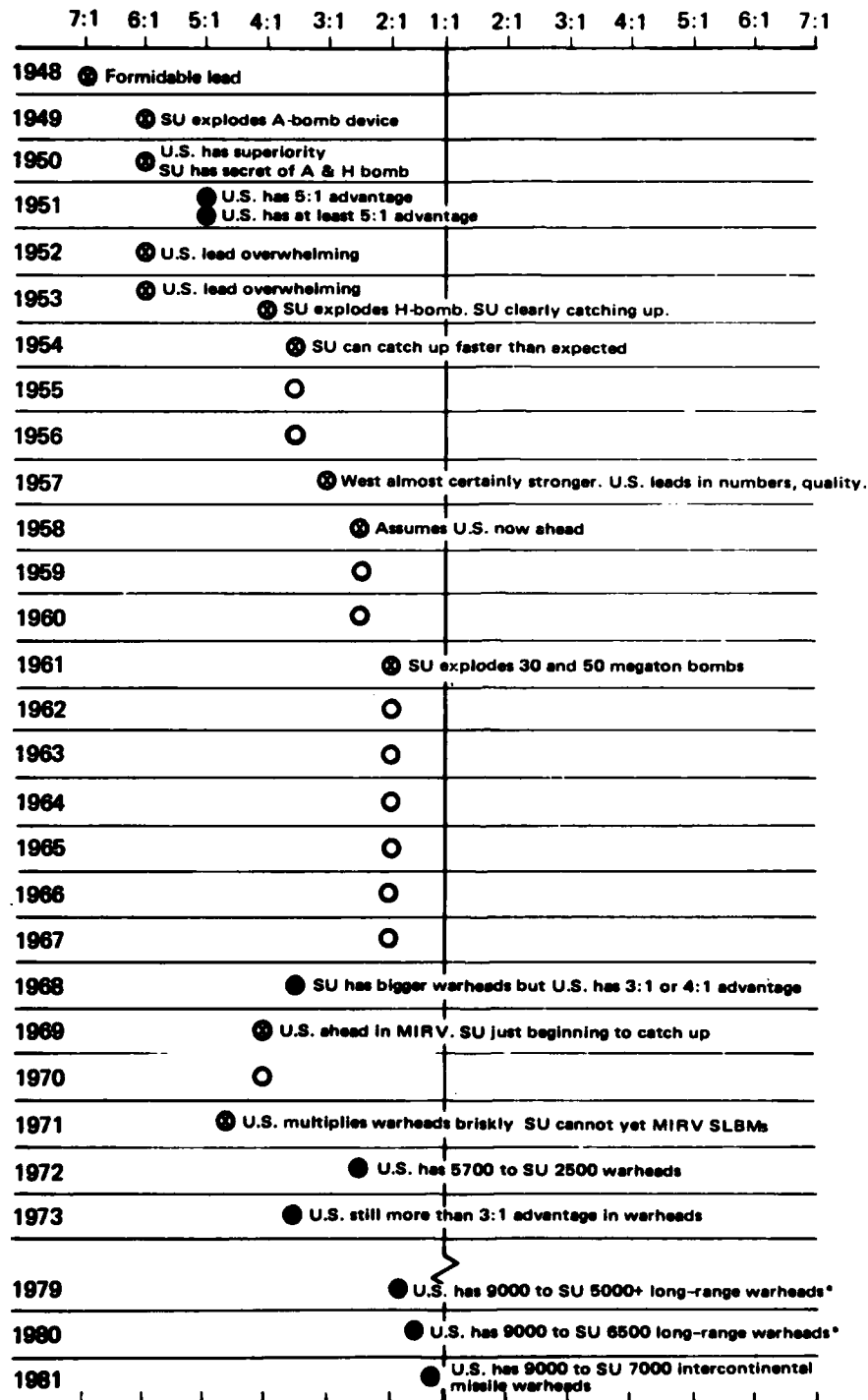
FIGURES

The earlier study contained the warning quoted below about the Charts that follow:

1. The three charts that follow should be treated with considerable caution. Most of *The Economist's* discussions of the strategic balance in the missile, bomber, and weapons areas are not quantitative and the description of their views in terms of the ratios of the charts (except where *The Economist* itself provided numerical ratios) have a very large element of the subjective or arbitrary. The reader will generally be better off using the Tabular Summary, except where he follows those points on the chart that refer to *Economist* quantitative statements of the balance. These points on the chart are distinguished from those that are qualitative.
2. The highest ratio provided on the charts on both the side of the US and SU advantage, namely 7:1, is to be taken as a more or less indeterminate ratio signifying a very, very great advantage indeed.
3. The reader should realize that the trends shown by the charts do *not* describe *The Economist's* views on trends in the US-SU strategic balance. They describe trends in *The Economist's* perception of the balance from year to year.¹

In order to facilitate comparison, the original charts are reproduced here, with data for 1979, 1980, and 1981 added at the bottom. The points for the more recent period are based on quantitative statements made by *The Economist*.

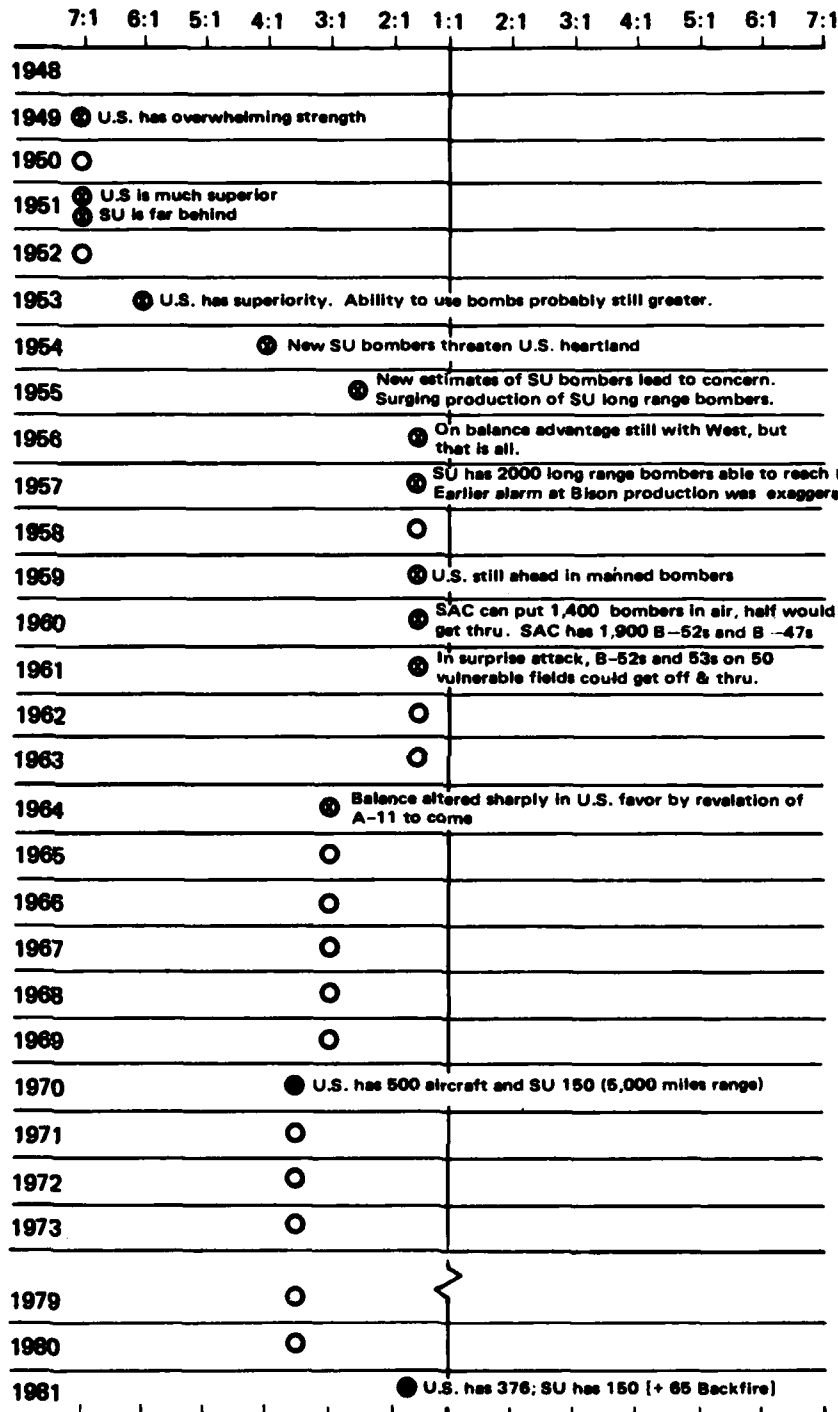
¹Herbert Goldhamer, *The Economist's Perception . . .*, p. 29.



*Figures approximated from graph, August 9, 1980 p. 36.

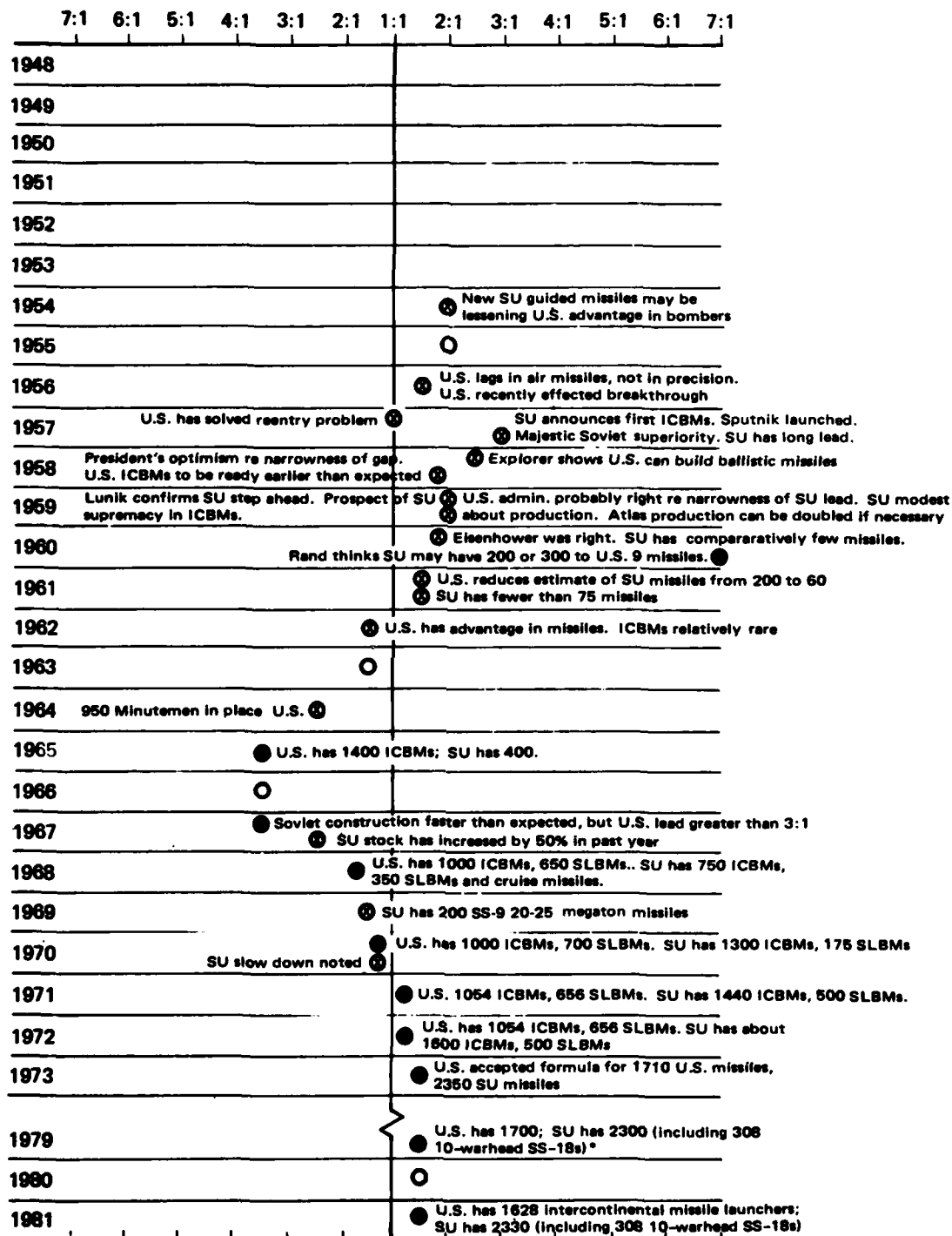
- No information. Such points are merely a repetition of last point for which there is information
- ⊙ Qualitative statement
- Quantitative statement

Fig. B.1 — *Economist's* perception of U.S.—SU strategic balance:
Nuclear bombs and warheads



- No information. Such points are merely a repetition of last point for which there is information.
- ② Qualitative statement
- ③ Quantitative statement

Fig. B.2 - *Economist's* perception of U.S. - SU strategic balance: Strategic bombers



*Figures approximated from graph, August 9, 1980, p. 36.

- No information. Such points are merely a repetition of last point for which there is information.
- Qualitative statement
- Quantitative statement

Fig. B.3 - Economist's perception of U.S. - SU strategic balance: ICBMs, SLBMs

Appendix C

RESULTS OF A TABULATION OF MILITARY VS. NONMILITARY ITEMS IN A SAMPLE OF ISSUES OF *THE ECONOMIST* 1979-1981

Preparatory research for the present report produced the impression that military matters received more attention in *The Economist* during the latter part of the period under study than in the early months of 1979. It was guessed that events such as the hostage crisis and Afghanistan focused attention on military affairs. The tabulation reported here was undertaken to put this impression to the test.

First, a sample of issues of *The Economist* was selected. One issue per month for each of the 36 months was chosen, starting with a randomly selected week and rotating the weeks thereafter through the end of 1981.

Table C.1
SAMPLE ISSUES

Month	Week	Date of Issue		
		1979	1980	1981
January	2nd	13	12	10
February	3rd	17	16	21
March	4th	24	29	28
April	1st	7	5	4
May	2nd	12	10	9
June	3rd	16	21	20
July	4th	28	26	25
August	1st	4	2	1
September	2nd	8	13	12
October	3rd	20	18	17
November	4th	24	22	28
December	1st	1	6	5
Total Issues		12	12	12

Each issue in the sample was then examined from cover to cover for items dealing with the United States and the Soviet Union. The criterion for inclusion of an item as being about the United States or the Soviet Union was the obvious one of mention in the section heading, headline, subhead or lead paragraph of the country's name, a major city, or an individual, institution (e.g., The Fed) or subject (e.g., the dollar) identified with the country.¹ This procedure yielded three groups of items: those dealing with the United States alone; those dealing with the Soviet Union alone; and those dealing with both the United States and the Soviet Union.

Within these three groups, each item was classified as being either a "Military" item or a "Nonmilitary" item. A reference anywhere in the text of an article to military matters, whether to the strategic balance, the defense budget, a military action, the threat of a military action, the possibility of a military action, military sales, military aid, or even the possibility of military assistance being given or discontinued, resulted in a classification of "Military." The remaining items fell into the "Nonmilitary" category.

It was recognized that this was at best a very crude measure. It took no account of the prominence of an item, its length, its location, column spread, the proportion of the item dealing with military subjects, whether the treatment was favorable or unfavorable, etc. Constraints of time and budget imposed these restrictions. At the same time, it was felt that the tabulation, with all its limitations would nonetheless provide a rough measure of the attention given to military matters during 1979-1981.

¹It was found that rigid application of this criterion could result in absurdities, so not every item that met it was included in the tabulation. For example, one article contained a U.S.-reference in the lead paragraph: "The issue of nuclear energy has caused as much fall-out in Switzerland as it did earlier in Austria, Sweden, West Germany, and California." (February 24, 1979, p. 45). The article was about Swiss attitudes toward nuclear energy. The item was not included. Similarly, other items that did *not* satisfy the criterion *were* included. An article on genetic engineering did not mention the U.S. until the fourth paragraph; the remainder of the article was entirely about U.S. handling of the problem. (May 5, 1979, p. 106.) The item was included. In sum, since the objective was to reflect the way a reader might view a given item, common sense was the decisive factor in judging whether or not to include an item in the tabulation.

As Table C.2 below shows, attention to military matters did increase during the period studied. Of all items about the United States and the Soviet Union that appeared in the 1979 issues sampled, 16 percent referred to military affairs or activities; in 1980, the proportion increased to 21 percent; and in 1981, almost one-quarter of the items about the United States and the Soviet Union were "Military." For a sample of this size the increase from 16 percent to 24 percent is significant statistically at the 0.95 probability level.

Table C.2
PROPORTION OF "MILITARY" AND "NONMILITARY"
ITEMS AMONG ALL ITEMS ABOUT THE
UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION

Items	1979	1980	1981
"Military"	16%	21%	24%
"Nonmilitary"	84%	79%	76%
Total number	354	427	435

The reason for the increased proportion of "Military" items is not far to seek. It was obviously the military activities of the two superpowers that produced the change. The chart below tracks the actual number of "Military" items that appeared in each of the sample issues. The peak in January 1980 was provoked by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and its aftermath. The increase that occurred in the latter part of 1981 resulted largely from the Reagan administration's efforts to strengthen American defenses and those of its allies.

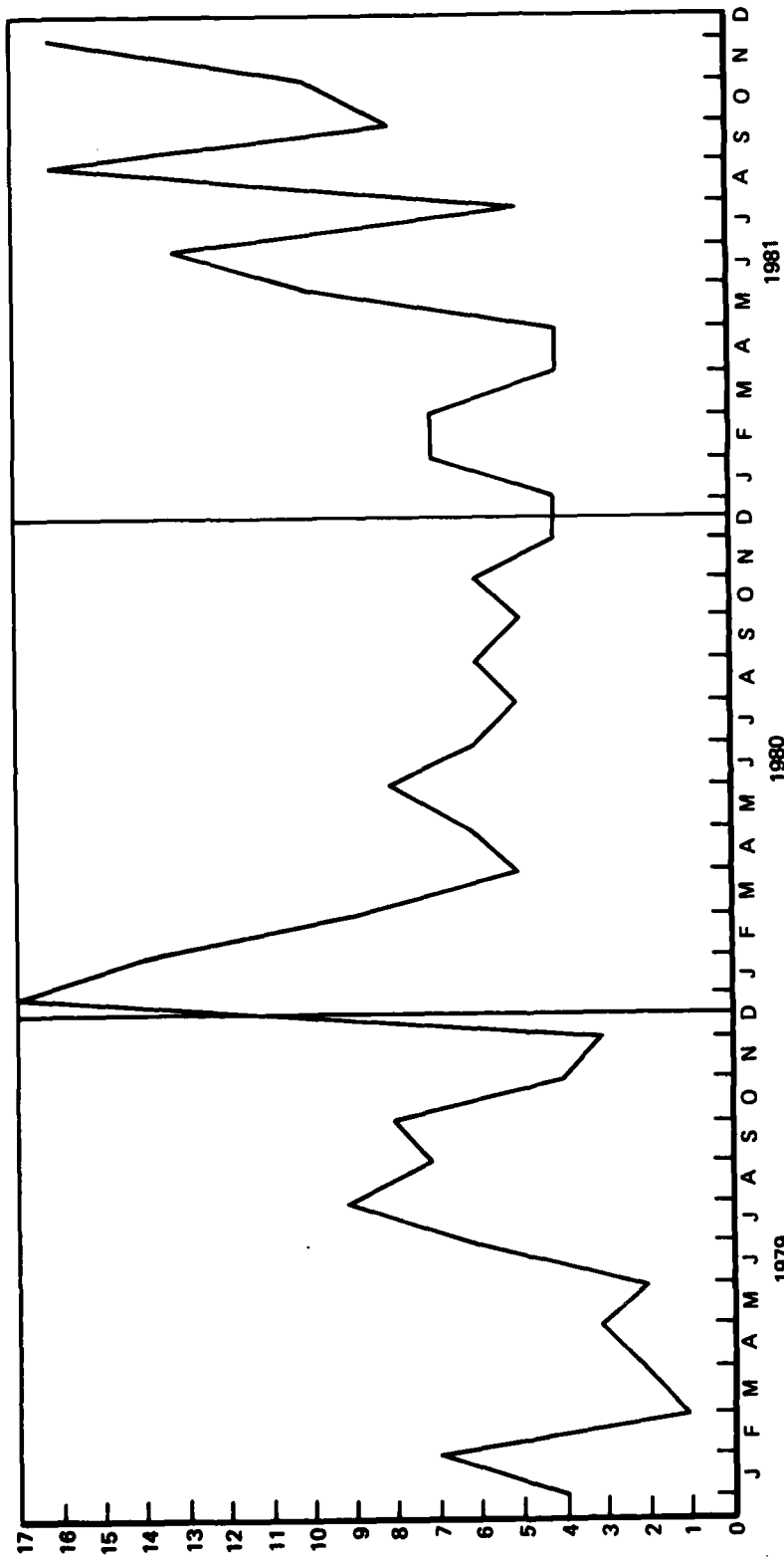


Fig. C.1 -- Number of "military" items in each issue of *The Economist* sampled, 1979 - 1981

Appendix D

A NOTE ON *THE ECONOMIST*'S PERCEPTION OF ITS ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The didactic tone of some *Economist* editorial statements brings to the fore the matter of *The Economist*'s perception of its own role on the international scene. It is certainly recognized by others as an influential journal. (This study itself is a testament of that.) Indeed, knowing of its influence among political decisionmakers, one of its readers chastised *The Economist* for perhaps having been somewhat irresponsible in the way it reported on the letters it received in response to an editorial against banning the bomb:

It was depressing to read (The bomb again, August 29th) that letters ran three to one against your views on nuclear deterrence. Obviously, many people are emotionally opposed but readers of *The Economist* should be more than averagely thoughtful people. It is alarming if they too are in the majority of such an opinion. Perhaps, however, disagreement inspires more letters to editors than agreement.

Nevertheless, is it not dangerous to leave matters there? Yours is a very influential paper and if our political leaders concluded that even your readers opposed a European deterrent, it might influence them too. (C.W.D. Morgan, London, WC2, September 12, 1981, p. 4)

There is evidence that *The Economist* views itself as an interpreter, strategically located as it is, between the United States and Europe, helping each to understand the other. In an editorial at the beginning of 1981, *The Economist* deplored the disparity in the views of the two halves of the Atlantic alliance. After describing the world situation as seen by the United States on the one hand and western Europeans on the other, *The Economist* stated:

This is a simplification, but not an over-simplification of the different pictures people see on the two sides of the Atlantic. Those who try to take a mid-Atlantic position, as this paper does, have to face both ways to explain to both sides why the difference is so great. (January 3, 1981, p. 7)

It would also appear that *The Economist*, aware of its influence, seeks to use it to achieve self-interested, if patriotic, ends. *The Economist* obviously views the United States as crucial to the protection of Britain and western Europe and regards maintaining an unbreakable link with the U.S. its mission in this respect. It therefore recommends ways in which this can be achieved and tries to stimulate action in the desired direction. Thus, in mid-1981, in an editorial statement headlined "Link those arms talks and bind America to Europe," *The Economist* advised the United States to have the same team, rather than two separate ones, negotiate at the new Salt talks and in the Euro-missile discussions with the Russians in order to create the impression for Europe and Russia that there is no gap in the "ladder of escalation at which the Americans could be tempted to stop the fighting before risking American cities to defend Europe."¹

This desire to weld the United States to Europe, for European protection, seems to underlie the emphasis *The Economist* gives to the link between intercontinental and nonintercontinental forces in assessing the overall U.S.-Soviet balance. The editorial quoted above goes on:

The Europeans' fear is that, if war breaks out in central Europe, the United States will panic and decide not to risk a nuclear exchange with Russia for the sake of its allies. . . . The risk of decoupling arises because the present American nuclear arsenal consists largely of two extremes: intercontinental weapons at one end, and short-range "battlefield" ones (most of which can't reach Russia) at the other. The gap in the middle means that there could be a "firebreak", a gap in the ladder of escalation . . . The planned new medium-range missiles, which can reach Russia from western Europe, should do a lot to eliminate this risk. (July 25, 1981, p. 53)

Again, in an editorial discussing how to keep the deterrent effective, *The Economist* emphasizes "The link to Europe . . . the unbreakable chain."

¹July 25, 1981, p. 53.

Assume that America's own nuclear armory is kept in good deterrent trim. How can it best be linked to the protect of western Europe? Answer: by making it as clear as humanly possible to the Russians that a Russian attack on western Europe will draw in American power at each level of escalation, right up to the level of American's intercontinental missile force.

At the moment, the Russians are ahead of Nato in all three of the pre-intercontinental levels of escalation. They have bigger non-nuclear forces on the European dividing line; they have more short-range "battlefield" nuclear weapons; they have more medium-range ones . . .

This is the gap in the chain of deterrence that Nato wants to close with 572 cruise and Pershing-2 missiles based in western Europe. . . . they would reduce Russia's present lead in the immediately pre-intercontinental level of escalation. . . . They would automatically involve the United States, because Russia says that any American missile launched on its soil--no matter where its from--will be treated as coming from America. . . . They would haul America into a war and thus make Russia less willing to start one. (August 1981, p. 16)

Perhaps because of an assumed identity of interests with the United States, *The Economist* on occasion adopts an avuncular, admonishing tone in addressing the United States. It may, as in the following, sound a bit testy with what it views as an undue delay in taking

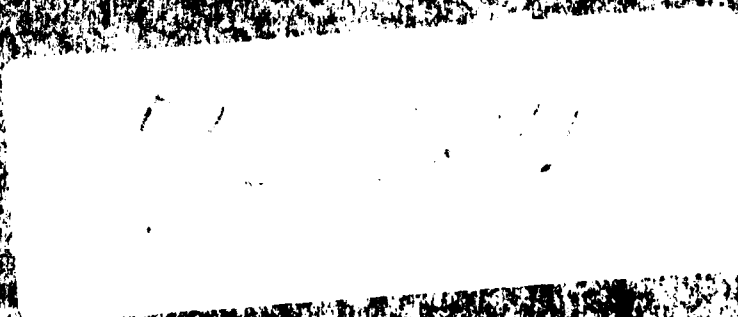
Okay, on with MX

The latest scheme for hiding America's new missile is good enough. So don't waste any more time

The Carter administration has come up with yet another scheme for deploying America's planned new MX missile. Each of the past four summers has seen a different proposal for hiding and protecting this potent new weapon when it comes into service around 1987. Since the latest project looks more sensible than any of its predecessors, and since the MX missile represents the last chance of keeping the land-based part of America's nuclear armory safe against a Soviet surprise attack, the time seems to have come to stop arguing about the best way of deploying the MX, and actually start making the thing and putting it in the ground. (May 10, 1980, p. 12)

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